



NOËSIS XVIII

THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL
OF
PHILOSOPHY

NOËSIS



UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL
OF
PHILOSOPHY



SPRING MMXVII

VOL. XVIII

Noēsis XVIII

Editors-in-Chief

Mat Armstrong
Amitpal Singh

Assistant Editor

Joe Yule

Print Editors

Lucas Bennett
Neil Bhatt
Adelle Castle
Christopher Yuen
Joe Yule

Supervising Online Editor

Zoe Sebastien

Online Editors

Ashley Fiazool
Fatima Minhas

Graphic Designer

Alex Lui

Typesetting

Mat Armstrong

Print Contributors


Manula Adhihetty
James Gu
En Hua Hu
Megan S. H. Tan
Howard Williams

Online Contributors

Spencer Knibutat
Tom Feore
Josefine Klingspor

CONTENTS

	Page
Editor's Introduction	v
Taking the Psychological Route <i>Manula Adhihetty</i>	1
Against the Stage-Theory <i>James Gu</i>	9
Fuzzy Epistemic Logic <i>En Hua Hu</i>	19
"I Have Reason and You Have None:" Ramsey and Wittgenstein on Ethics <i>Megan S. H. Tan</i>	33
Being Without Time: Possibility as <i>Existentiale</i> and Furthering the Preliminary Investigation in <i>Being and Time</i> <i>Howard Williams</i>	41
Law, Philosophy, and Discrimination <i>In Conversation with Sophia Moreau</i>	53
Leadership, Freedom, and Emotion <i>In Conversation with Martin Pickavé</i>	71
Online Publication Abstracts <i>noesisjournal.wordpress.com</i>	85



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2020 with funding from
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/noesis18uoft>

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Noēsis has done a lot this year.

In addition to this print edition, we've expanded the operations of Noēsis to include events and workshops. This fall, we collaborated with our friends at the Philosophy Course Union to re-launch last year's issue, Noēsis XVII. This spring, we are conducting our launch event at the Undergraduate Research Conference, hosting this issue's authors as a panel to introduce their papers to their listeners and, hopefully very soon, their readers.

Our workshop series has seen important success. At our first workshop, "Writing a Publishable Paper," we walked into a JHB 401 too packed to seat all of the interested students eager to improve their critical thinking, writing, and researching skills. We went on to host other workshops on research, editing, and conferences, also with good student engagement. Through our workshops, we hope to have added something valuable to the philosophical community and to the academic support network available to students.

There are no workshops in the journal's footnotes, no events in the bibliographies, but we do these things because they bring the journal and the community closer together. By helping undergraduates at the University develop their skills, we ensure quality submissions and critical readers in the years to come. By holding events to distribute and advertise our journal, we deliver our authors the readership they deserve.

In addition to three online publications, this year's issue features five papers in its print volume, and we are very pleased with the original thinking each author brought to us and each paper's development through the editing process. We were delighted to work with Manula, James, En Hua, Megan, Howard, Spencer, Tom, and Josefine; they were keen to improve their already excellent work, and we hope we were able to provide helpful advice.

Manula Adhietty's paper, "Taking the Psychological Route," considers the debate between moral cognitivism and moral non-cognitivism. Adhietty comes to the defense of moral non-cognitivism by proposing a novel account of moral reasoning—with psychological constraints, rather than logical entailment. Adhietty's paper is a helpful primer for those unfamiliar with the cognitivism vs. non-cognitivism debate in metaethics, all the while maintaining a high degree of philosophical ingenuity and rigor.

James Gu's paper, "Against the Stage-Theory," takes on Ted Sider's stage-

theory view of identity through time, epitomized in Sider's reference to Shakespeare: "All the world's a stage." Gu finds that, while abundant in rhetorical flair, the stage-theory is lacking in philosophical plausibility. Gu's main critique is from the existence of predicates, like reasoning, that accurately describe us, yet cannot accurately describe person-stages. Gu's paper introduces four-dimensionalism and provides a well-constructed and rigorous argument.

En Hua Hu's paper, "Fuzzy Epistemic Logic," is the author's second entry into *Noësis* history. Hu seeks to provide a formal logic system to accurately capture 'fuzzy logic'. Hu's paper provides a helpful balance of informal explanation and formal argument that allows both the formally-inclined and the formally-disinclined to delve into epistemic logic. Needless to say, Hu's contribution this year matches the high standards he has set in the past.

Megan S. H. Tan's paper, "'I Have Reason and You Have None': Ramsey and Wittgenstein on Ethics," investigates the contrasting attitudes of Wittgenstein and Ramsey toward the values—or lack thereof—that exist in the world of facts. Tan's paper provides an illuminating discussion of the ethical worries of Wittgenstein and Ramsey while making an interesting argument about the philosophical projects of the two thinkers. This paper is sure to intrigue both those familiar and those unfamiliar with the two thinkers and early-twentieth-century philosophy.

Howard Williams's paper, "Being Without Time: Possibility as *Existential* and Furthering the Preliminary Investigation in *Being and Time*," offers close analysis of Heidegger's famous work to investigate what comes next in Heidegger's thinking. Williams's paper is a helpful introduction for those interested in but apprehensive about Heidegger's own works (because they're really, really hard to read), while pulling together impressive amounts of textual evidence and analysis to argue for the author's interpretation of Heidegger.

A recurring feature of *Noësis* volumes are their faculty interviews. This year, we spoke with Professors Sophia Moreau and Martin Pickavé.

Professor Moreau's interview manages to cover much ground in a conversation that lasted an hour, but felt much shorter. Her passion for her research, which combines law and philosophy, shines through in lucid statements of her views and in her fascinating anecdotes. Professor Moreau discusses her pioneering work in discrimination theory, a relatively young field. After explaining why it is that philosophers have important contributions to make in understanding discrimination, she hints at the thesis of an in-progress book, which lays out a theory of what makes discrimination morally wrong. Our conversation with Professor Moreau concludes with her advice to students with interests in philosophy, law, or both.

Our interview with Professor Pickavé is also wide-ranging; we discuss Professor Pickavé's first encounters with philosophy, his goals as Chair of the Department, and his philosophical interests and views. While Professor Pickavé provides some advice for students, in truly philosophical spirit, he also offers some advice about advice—no doubt the most valuable advice of all. Responding to inquiries about his interests in medieval theories of emotion

and the problem of free will, Professor Pickavé explains some of his views—including sharing some details he would never reveal in class! These topics converge to form a truly memorable conversation.

We recognize that we can only do as much as the level of support we receive allows us. Thus, our progress this year is evidence of the massive amounts of support we've benefitted from in putting together Noësis XVIII.

Noësis is heavily indebted to the administration at the Department of Philosophy. Ben Eldridge, Mary Frances Ellison, and Eric Correia particularly provide essential support for the journal's operations. Eric spent countless hours setting up Noësis as a CCR-recognized activity for our editorial board this year, which does a great service to our organization and its members.

Financially, Noësis XVIII has received support from a wide variety of sources. We are grateful to our perennial donors who continually allow Noësis to thrive: The Department of Philosophy, Trinity College, University College, Innis College, and the Arts and Science Student Union. This year, we are grateful for the newfound support of New College and the Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students.

We are indebted to Belinda Piercy and Adam Murray for their involvement in the Undergraduate Research Conference, which serves as the host for the launch of Noësis XVIII. Adam is also to thank for his consultation on typesetting matters; if the layout of the journal has merit, it is because of Adam's excellent advice.

Noësis has found itself again extremely fortunate to have the assistance of the talented Alex Lui, our Graphic Designer. Alex has created a graphic for every single thing we did this year—he even created a sign for the door of our shared office (JHB 418). Alex consistently went beyond our expectations to create excellent materials for Noësis.

There is still much more Noësis can do. We look forward to hearing of the expanded student- and faculty-readership, student involvement, and workshop programming of Noësis. We look forward to hearing about Noësis' collaborations with other student organizations, bringing more students into the philosophical community at the University of Toronto. Most of all, we look forward to seeing Noësis remain and become stronger as an integral part of the philosophical community at the University of Toronto.

Sincerely yours,

Mat Armstrong

Amit Singh



EDITORS - IN - CHIEF

NOËSIS
UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

NOĒSIS XVIII

TAKING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ROUTE

MANULA ADHIHETTY

This paper examines a debate between two meta-ethical views, moral cognitivism and moral non-cognitivism, investigating which view sustains a plausible and accurate account of reasoning involving moral judgments. Moral cognitivists present what is called the Frege-Geach problem as an argument for why their view is superior to moral non-cognitivism. This paper outlines the Frege-Geach problem and proposes an account of moral reasoning on behalf of moral non-cognitivism that sidesteps the Frege-Geach problem.

Key Words: Moral Cognitivism, Moral Non-Cognitivism, Frege-Geach Problem, the Frege point, Conditional Command

Meta-ethical views about the nature of moral thought and language fall under either moral cognitivism or moral non-cognitivism. On the one hand, roughly put, moral cognitivism is the view that there are moral properties in the world and our statements about them can be true or false depending on whether they correspond to these properties. For example, moral cognitivists would hold that it is a fact about the world that murder is wrongful and statements that assert this fact are true while statements that deny it are false. On the other hand, moral non-cognitivism is the view that there are no moral properties in the world and statements about (alleged) moral properties will lack truth conditions. For example, moral non-cognitivists would hold that it is not a fact about the world that murder is wrongful, and so statements that assert or deny the wrongfulness of murder will be neither true nor false. Of the arguments concerning this division, what has come to be called the “Frege-Geach problem” is a moral cognitivist’s standard objection to moral non-cognitivism. The Frege-Geach problem arises out of two key observations: (1) the content-force theory of meaning, and (2) the Frege point. In this paper, I will first distinguish between the ways in which moral cognitivism and moral non-cognitivism account for our moral judgments. Second, I will outline observations (1) and (2) and explain how together they develop the Frege-Geach problem against

moral non-cognitivism. Finally, I will propose an alternative non-cognitivist account of moral reasoning that sidesteps this problem.

Two preliminary comments will help me distinguish moral cognitivism from moral non-cognitivism. First, both these meta-ethical views operate under a correspondence theory of truth.¹ They maintain that, where a proposition is the information that an expression “put[s] forward for consideration,” an expression is true exactly if its propositional content matches the way the world is.² Second, the domain of propositional content—the way the world is—includes both internal and external facts. Internal facts concern a person’s mental states, including her beliefs and commitments; external facts concern entities, properties, events, or actions that exist in the physical world.

Cognitivism about moral judgments is the view that our moral judgments express propositions: They are “not generically different” from expressions that make truth claims about internal or external facts.³ Accordingly, a person who says, “Killing is wrong,” makes a factual claim about the physical world or about her own mental states. She claims either that the act of killing has the property of wrongness or that she believes that the act of killing has the property of wrongness. In contrast, non-cognitivism about moral judgments is the view that our moral judgments do not express “psychological propositions [or] empirical propositions of any kind.”⁴ Moral non-cognitivists believe that our moral judgments make no truth claims about internal or external facts, but merely express certain psychological attitudes.⁵ Thus, for non-cognitivists, a person who says, “Killing is wrong,” expresses an attitude of disapproval or a negative emotional reaction to the act of killing without expressing the empirical fact or the psychological belief that killing has the property of wrongness.

I have so far explained the difference between moral cognitivism and non-cognitivism in terms of how each theory regards moral judgments. The former maintains that moral judgments express propositions, while the latter holds that moral judgments express psychological attitudes. I will now outline (1) the content-force theory of meaning and (2) the Frege point in order to show how together they raise The Frege-Geach problem against moral non-cognitivism.

According to the content-force theory of meaning, the meaning of an expression is determined by its content and force.⁶ The content of an expression denotes a proposition. The force of an expression is the purpose for which

¹ Ayer implicitly expresses this general feature. See Ayer (1936), 104, 107. For an exception, see Blackburn (1984), 197-202.

² In other words, on a correspondence theory of truth, an expression is true just in case what it says about the world matches the way the world is. I borrow the above definition of “proposition” from Geach (1965), 449.

³ Ayer 104. See Ayer 104-5 for a discussion of utilitarian and subjectivist analyses of ethical terms that highlights key features of cognitivism.

⁴ Ayer 105.

⁵ Ayer 105-9.

⁶ Geach’s claim that the addition of truth functors to form complex sentences out of atomic ones changes the sense that the atomic sentences possess individually implies the content-force theory of meaning. See Geach 452-3.

that expression is used. Take, for example, the meaning of “Killing is wrong.” Since cognitivists hold that our moral judgments express propositions, they may explain the meaning of this judgment in terms of both its content and force.⁷ Thus, for moral cognitivists, the meaning of “Killing is wrong” consists in both the factual claim that killing has the property of wrongness, and the purpose for which this expression is used, whether it be to make an assertion, ask a question, consider a hypothetical, etc. However, because moral non-cognitivists hold that moral judgments do not express propositions but only express certain psychological attitudes, they must explain the meaning of a moral judgment exclusively in terms of its force. As such, for non-cognitivists, the meaning of “Killing is wrong” consists solely of the purpose for which it is used.

The Frege point is a claim about assertion that declares that the same proposition may occur either asserted or unasserted.⁸ Assertion, or the lack of it, denotes the force of an expression, i.e., the purpose for which an expression is used. Framed differently, the Frege point observes that an expression’s content is independent of its force. If true, the Frege point entails that if “Killing is wrong” expresses any propositional content at all, then it expresses the same propositional content irrespective of how it is used.⁹ That is, provided that “Killing is wrong” expresses a proposition, tokens of “Killing is wrong” in the assertion “Killing is wrong,” the question “Do you think that killing is wrong?” and the hypothetical “If killing is wrong, then killing bin Laden is wrong” all express the same propositional content.

The Frege point together with the content-force theory of meaning raises the Frege-Geach problem against moral non-cognitivism. This problem undermines moral non-cognitivism by demonstrating that, under moral non-cognitivism, logically valid moral reasoning is impossible. Since this problem arises concerning moral reasoning, i.e., reasoning involving moral judgments, it will be helpful to consider a specific moral argument:

1. Killing is wrong.
2. If killing is wrong, then killing bin Laden is wrong.

∴ 3. Killing bin Laden is wrong. [1 2 *modus ponens*]

This argument uses *modus ponens* reasoning: 1 and 3 are the antecedent and consequent, respectively, of the material conditional in 2. Thus, the truth of 1 and 2 logically entails the truth of 3. Yet this argument, like any other, is valid

⁷Here it is ambiguous whether the meaning of an expression is a function of the combination of its content and force, or whether we could consider the meaning of an expression with respect to either its content or its force (i.e., isolate its meaning with respect to content only, force only, and the combination of content and force). I believe the latter interpretation would better articulate The Frege-Geach Problem.

⁸Geach 449, 461.

⁹Blackburn 190.

only if there is no equivocation throughout all of a term's occurrences: "Killing is wrong" must have the same meaning in 1 as it does in 2, and "Killing bin Laden is wrong" must have the same meaning in 2 as it does in 3. Moral cognitivists may fulfill this criterion for validity by appealing to the Frege point: Moral judgments, such as "Killing is wrong" and "Killing bin Laden is wrong," have the same meaning in each of their occurrences in virtue of expressing the same propositional content.¹⁰

However, moral non-cognitivists cannot appeal to the Frege point because they believe that moral judgments lack propositional content. Instead, provided that an expression's content and force fully explain its meaning, moral non-cognitivists must explain how moral judgments have the same meaning in each of their occurrences just in virtue of their force. Yet, moral judgments might fulfill different purposes in each judgment's occurrences within an argument. Here, "Killing is wrong" makes an assertion in 1, but considers a hypothetical in 2; "Killing bin Laden is wrong" considers the consequence of a hypothetical in 2 but makes an assertion in 3. Therefore, moral non-cognitivism fails to explain how moral arguments are without equivocation provided that moral judgments fulfill different purposes in each occurrence within an argument, and the purposes these judgments fulfill alone determine their meaning.¹¹ This is the Frege-Geach problem for non-cognitivism. Unless they address it, moral non-cognitivists must accept that, if their theory is true, then formally valid moral reasoning is impossible.

I will now outline an alternative non-cognitivist account of moral reasoning that sidesteps the Frege-Geach problem. Then, I will defend this account against plausible objections. Let us revisit the previous argument and interpret it using the account of moral reasoning I propose.

1. Killing is wrong.
2. If killing is wrong, then killing bin Laden is wrong.

∴ 3. Killing bin Laden is wrong. [1 2 *modus ponens*]

On this alternative account, 1 and 3 express psychological attitudes: 1 expresses a negative emotional reaction towards killing, while 3 expresses a negative emotional reaction towards killing bin Laden. This is because, according to moral non-cognitivism, moral judgments express psychological attitudes, not propositions. 2 is what I will call a "conditional command": a psychological constraint that, provided a subject expresses one psychological attitude, compels her to express a related psychological attitude in certain appropriate contexts. Here, given that the subject expresses a negative emotional reaction towards killing, the conditional command compels her to express a negative

¹⁰Geach 452; Blackburn 190.

¹¹See Blackburn 191 for another exposition of The Frege-Geach Problem: "In unasserted contexts, etc. no attitude is evinced when the sentence is uttered," but the meaning is the same as in asserted contexts. "This variable feature does not give the (constant) meaning."

emotional reaction towards killing bin Laden. Importantly, this conditional command is *not* truth-functional. Since the psychological attitudes expressed by 1 and 3 do not make factual claims about the world—and so lack truth values—the conditional command which in certain contexts compels a subject to express 3 provided she expresses 1 does not take truth values into account.

This alternative non-cognitivist account of moral reasoning sidesteps the Frege-Geach problem by denying that moral arguments need to be formally valid. Since moral non-cognitivists hold that moral judgments express psychological attitudes, arguments that, strictly speaking, involve these judgments will not depend on truth values. Instead, these arguments will work to connect certain expressions of psychological attitudes with others that are appropriate in the given context, such that a person who expresses the former will be compelled also to express the latter. What moral arguments amount to on this account is not functionally different from what moral arguments would amount to in the ordinary cognitivist account of moral reasoning. On the cognitivist account, a moral argument works to connect one moral judgment with another through logical entailment. This connection is justified because moral cognitivists believe that moral judgments express propositions that carry truth values. Yet a non-cognitivist account of moral reasoning need not strive to explain moral reasoning in terms of logical entailment. If moral judgments express psychological attitudes, it is reasonable to suppose that the way in which one attitude relates to another is explained by some psychological feature, not a logical one.

An opponent of this alternative non-cognitivist account of moral reasoning might object that the appeal to a conditional command is dubious. I have explained that a conditional command is simply a psychological constraint that binds one expression of a psychological attitude to another in certain contexts. In fact, conditional commands are commonplace; they are not exclusive to moral reasoning. For example, in virtue of cheering for our favourite football team we experience a psychological constraint to “boo” the opposition team for playing well.¹² In this case, the positive and negative emotional reactions do not logical entail one another. Rather, there is a psychological constraint upon us in virtue of our cheering for one team to “boo” the opposing team for playing well. Furthermore, conditional commands need not only bind one expression of a psychological attitude to another; they may even bind an expression of a psychological attitude to a course of action. For instance, a person who explains that his love for his mother made him buy a cake for her on Mother’s Day likely experiences the conditional command, “If you love your mother, then buy her a cake on Mother’s Day.” Insofar as the person expresses the psychological attitude of love for his mother, he is compelled to buy his mother a cake for Mother’s Day; here we see a conditional command at work, connecting a psychological attitude with a certain course of action.¹³ These

¹²Here our expression of a positive emotional reaction towards our favourite team’s playing well compels us to express a negative emotional reaction towards the opposition’s playing well.

¹³I will explain later how it is possible for a person to admit there is a compulsion or psycho-

observations indicate that conditional commands are frequently used in explanations concerning psychological attitudes. Therefore, one should not chastise this alternative non-cognitivist account of moral reasoning for appealing to the notion of a conditional command.

An opponent might further object that this alternative account violates our intuition that moral arguments have the same form as non-moral ones: Moral arguments should be like non-moral arguments in being logically binding.¹⁴ Either we have no such intuition or this intuition fails us, for moral arguments do not seem to be logically binding in the way that non-moral arguments are. If moral arguments were logically binding and 2 were an ordinary material conditional, then it would be impossible for us to endorse 1, accept 2, and reject 3. But this is clearly possible; it is logically *consistent* to hold such conflicting views.¹⁵ Most of us would fully maintain that killing is wrong, accept that if killing is wrong then killing bin Laden is wrong, but reject that killing bin Laden is wrong. The alternative non-cognitivist account of moral reasoning provides a plausible explanation of this phenomenon, namely, that the conditional command, “If killing is wrong, then killing bin Laden is wrong,” imposes only a *weak* psychological constraint on most of us.¹⁶ It binds our negative emotional reaction towards killing with a negative emotional reaction towards killing bin Laden, but this binding does not carry the strength of logical entailment. As such, even though we might experience a psychological pull to express a negative emotional reaction towards killing bin Laden, we may yet express a negative emotional reaction towards killing without expressing the same towards killing bin Laden.¹⁷ This explanation more accurately represents the way in which our moral reasoning seems to work. The way in which we engage in moral reasoning seems to indicate that one moral judgment does not logically entail the other, even in the absence of further premises that might obstruct such logical entailment. Thus, contrary to the intuition that the opponent puts forward, moral arguments do not have the same form as non-moral arguments. This conclusion indicates an advantage of the alternative non-cognitivist account of moral reasoning over the traditional, cognitivist account of moral reasoning. By appealing to the psychological constraint imposed by a conditional command instead of the logical constraint imposed by a material conditional, the alternative account more accurately represents how

logical constraint and yet ignore the course of action that the constraint prescribes. See footnote 16.

¹⁴The opponent cannot mean by “form” anything else, for this alternative non-cognitivist account of moral arguments has the same outward appearance as non-moral arguments.

¹⁵Scheuler raises this line of thought as an objection to Blackburn’s Quasi-Realism. See Schueler (1988), 495.

¹⁶As such, we may accept that this command is psychologically binding—that it compels us to some degree—and yet ignore this psychological constraint.

¹⁷This assumes that we are not entirely passive with respect to the psychological constraints that conditional commands place on us. I will not here explain why this is. It suffices to note that possible explanations may appeal to the way in which one psychological constraint might balance against others, or introduce the notion of an independent faculty of will, which in some way supervises the psychological constraints and their consequences.

moral reasoning works.

In this paper, I have proposed an alternative non-cognitivist account of moral reasoning. I have shown that this account sidesteps the Frege-Geach problem by explaining the mechanism of moral reasoning without appealing to formal validity. Additionally, I have attempted to justify this account by demystifying the notion of a conditional command and by demonstrating the accuracy of an account of moral reasoning that invokes psychological instead of logical entailment. Admittedly, this account requires further development in order to become a fully-fledged account of moral reasoning. However, I believe I have here sketched a framework for future work that will reinvigorate moral non-cognitivism and spark further investigation into the nature of moral thought and reasoning.

REFERENCES

- Ayer, A. J., "Chapter VI: Critique of Ethics and Theology." In *Language, Truth, and Logic*, 1936, pp. 102–113.
- Blackburn, S., "Chapter 6: Evaluations, Projections, and Quasi-Realism." In *Spreading the Word*, Clarendon, 1984, pp. 181–202.
- Geach, P. T., "Assertion." *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 74, no. 4, (1965), pp. 449–465.
- Schueler, G. F., "Modus Ponens and Moral Realism." *Ethics*, vol. 98, no. 3, (1988), pp. 492–500.

AGAINST THE STAGE-THEORY

JAMES GU

Theodore Sider, a leading proponent of four-dimensionalism, made the infamous statement in his 1996 paper that “all the world’s a stage.” In the paper, he argues against the traditional four-dimensionalist doctrine and claims that persons, instead of being identical to the *aggregate of person-stages*, are actually identical only to the *stages* themselves. This doctrine, now commonly dubbed the *stage-theory*, views itself as an “enhanced version” of four-dimensionalism and boasts that it retains the merits of being a four-dimensional doctrine while being able to solve a multitude of problems that the traditional view had been unable to solve. This paper seeks to show that the *stage-theory* (or stage-view), while plausible on an initial glance, should ultimately be rejected. The line of argument that the author employs to reach this conclusion is to show that there are properties which are essentially predicated of us that cannot be predicated of independent personal-stages, but exclusively to aggregates of personal-stages.¹

Key Words: Time, Four-Dimensionalism, Discursive Reasoning, Person-stages, Personal Identity, Stage-View, Ted Sider, Derek Parfit

INTRODUCTION

Sider (1996) makes the radical statement that “all the world’s a stage.” He argues that traditional four-dimensionalists are incorrect in claiming that we are aggregates of instantaneous person-stages. Rather, Sider proposes that we are identical to the instantaneous person-stages themselves! This radical view, while philosophically justified to a certain extent, is largely a negative influence on the doctrine of four-dimensionalism generally. After all, four-dimensionalism was first introduced as a seemingly angelic solution to show

¹The following texts were consulted in writing the paper, though are not explicitly cited: Aristotle’s *De Anima*, Lewis (1976), Sider (1997).

that material substances can retain strict identity-persistence through time in an intrinsically unstable world filled with changes and transmutations at every twist and turn. As much as four-dimensionalism has progressed and evolved throughout the past century, the doctrine, at its very core, is still nonetheless a theory of material persistence.

It is clear that Sider's stage-view throws direct identity-persistence right out the window, and with it, gone is the most alluring aspect of four-dimensionalism. Hence, I shall defend traditional four-dimensionalists by showing that Sider's stage-view should ultimately be rejected due to the existence of certain essential properties which we strictly predicate of ourselves that cannot be predicated of independent person-stages, but exclusively of aggregates of person-stages. Specifically, the line of argument I shall employ to arrive at this desired conclusion is to show that our unique capacity for discursive reasoning (or simply rationality) cannot be predicated of individual person-stages, but only of a collection of mentally connected and temporally contiguous person-stages. Thus, if we (*qua* persons) take ourselves to be the proper subjects of reason in the strictest sense possible, then it is metaphysically impossible for us to be identical to individual person-stages which cannot have the capacity to engage in discursive reasoning.

1 MOTIVATION FOR THE STAGE-VIEW

The doctrine of four-dimensionalism has been hailed by critics (and even some supporters) as a "crazy" metaphysics filled with counter-intuitive claims about the physical world. Given that this criticism towards four-dimensionalism holds some degree of truth, what incredible reason could encourage a philosopher to embrace the stage-view, a version of four-dimensionalism that clearly promotes a range of even more incredulous principles and results?

To the surprise of many, there are a good number of strong arguments which make the stage-theory seem like an extremely compelling view to turn to. For one, the theory offers a much "cleaner" solution to the fission and fusion paradoxes proposed by Parfit (1971). Roughly summarizing, Parfit's paradox goes as follows:

1. Strict Identity is a one-to-one relationship that cannot admit of degrees. For instance, person X can only be strictly identical to person X .
2. Mental continuity can be a one-to-many relationship or many-to-one relationship. For instance, if person X_1 goes through duplication (fission) at T_1 , then person X_1 will be mentally continuous with both person X_1 and person X_2 (the exact clone) at T_2 .
3. Since strict identity and mental continuity have different characteristics, what matters in identity-persistence is not mental continuity.

Despite this conclusion, common intuition tells us that mental continuity *does* matter in the persistence of our identity. After all, it certainly *seems* to be the

case that our beliefs, memories, and emotions are more essential to our identity than our material attributes.

Lewis (1983) attempted to show how the doctrine of four-dimensionalism may help reconcile the apparent chasm between mental continuity and identity persistence. Employing the principles of four-dimensionalism, Lewis claims that individual persons are, strictly speaking, temporally-extended aggregates of person-stages instead of three-dimensional substances. Furthermore, he clarifies that multiple person-stages are part of an identical continuant person (have an I-relation) as long as they have a relation of mental continuity between them (R-relation). Combining these two principles, he claims that a person is a *maximal*, R-interrelated (or I-interrelated) aggregate of person-stages.²

These four-dimensional principles then help solve Parfit's paradox in the following fashion. Lewis states that "person" X_1 at T_1 and "person" X_1 at T_2 (after the fission) are in fact two temporally segregated but mentally connected person-stages that are part of a maximal aggregate of person-stages, which is more correctly called *Person* X_1 . Similarly, person X_1 at T_1 and person X_2 at T_2 are also two temporally segregated but mentally connected person-stages that are part of a *different* maximal aggregate of person-stages, which is more correctly called *Person* X_2 . Hence, there are actually *two different* maximal-aggregates of person-stages in the picture: One that belongs to *Person* X_1 and another to *Person* X_2 . How exactly does this solve Parfit's problem? Well, four-dimensionalists can state that although mental continuity between the person-stages can be one-to-many or many-to-one, the identity persistence of the whole aggregate is strictly one-to-one. In short, while the aggregate *Person* X_2 and the aggregate *Person* X_1 share the same stages at some points of time (they overlap at times), they are, nonetheless, different aggregates belonging to different (though extremely similar) persons.

But this is strange! If *Person* X_2 is an aggregate of person-stages that also has the person-stages of *Person* X_1 before the fission occurred, then we must say that *Person* X_2 coexisted with *Person* X_1 even before the fission actually occurred. But surely that must be impossible! After all, it would be absurd to say that the person who had been living a perfectly normal life before the fission was actually two *materially coinciding* persons occupying the same body. Lewis states that this is no big issue since it is perfectly fine for two maximal-aggregates of person-stages to be sharing the same stages (just as different roads can share one intersection). As plausible as Lewis's justification may seem, allowing material coincidence may result in a serious problem of spatial *overcrowding*: The quantity of material things existing at any given location becomes vague.³

The stage-view offers a simple answer to Parfit's problem without having to accept the possibility of material coincidence or overcrowding. A stage-theorist will agree with both of Parfit's premises that identity is a one-to-one

²Lewis 60-1.

³See Olson (2007), 121.

relation and that mental continuity can be a one-to-many or many-to-one relation and make the following claim: Mental continuity is a relationship between one person-stage and another, while identity is a relationship between a specific person-stage and itself. In short, while a stage-theorist is agreeing with Parfit in saying that mental continuity has nothing to do with identity persistence, this is only because a stage-theorist thinks that there is no *real* identity persistence in the world; a person is strictly identical to that person's current person-stage and that is all a person is identical to. Hence, Parfit's cases of fission also become exceedingly simple to explain: *Person X₁* at *T₁* is identical only to *Person X₁* at *T₁*, and the two persons that "came to being" as a result of the fission are two entirely new persons (namely, *Person Y* and *Person Z*).⁴

With that said, most devout four-dimensionalists (such as myself) are very much willing to bite the bullet of overcrowding and simply accept the possibility of material coincidence. After all, the stage-view is just as "crazy" as the theories of material coincidence and overcrowding (if not more crazy). Hence, it seems like justifying the stage-view requires a further, much stronger argument. As it happens, there is a strong argument that supports the stage-view over traditional four-dimensionalism. Specifically, the stage-view offers the best solution (and perhaps the only solution) to the *thinking-stage problem*.⁵ I shall now discuss this problem here and show how it is a threat to traditional four-dimensionalism.

To begin, allow me to put forth a basic principle of four-dimensionalism: It is not us, the aggregates of person-stages, who strictly have the various properties which we commonly attribute to ourselves; rather, all of our properties (mental and physical) and all of our activities (sleeping or speaking) belong strictly to the person-stages themselves. Thus, it seems like we walk, talk, read, sleep, and even think only in the derivative sense of having those stages with the respective properties. Yet on the contrary, we have fervently believed throughout our lives that we do have these properties in the strictest sense. For instance, it seems like I and strictly I am currently writing this paper, and you and strictly you reading it. If this belief is true, then why should we say that we are aggregates instead of the stages themselves? After all, if the stages have the essential attributes that we attribute to ourselves while aggregates do not, we must be the stages instead of the aggregates. Thus, it seems like the stage-view prevails.

Now someone might try to counter the stage-view by appealing to persistence: We have strict identity persistence through time, and thus we must be the aggregates that actually extend through time. However, just as we may never prove empirically or epistemologically that we are not BIVs (Brains in Vats), it is also impossible to prove empirically that we really persist through time. For all I know, the person writing this sentence may not be the same person as the one who wrote the previous sentence. Although it seems like I have the memory of writing the previous sentence, it may very well be the case

⁴Sider (1996), 439.

⁵Olson 122.

that I am falsely identifying myself with an extremely similar *temporal counterpart* of myself (a previous person-stage) who actually wrote the sentence.⁶ In short, the stage-view wishes to claim that persistence is just an illusion that is brought by falsely identifying ourselves with our temporal counterparts.

2 REJECTING THE STAGE-VIEW

The path around the stage-view while still keeping four-dimensionalism intact is to examine whether or not there exist certain properties that are essentially predicated of human beings which cannot be predicated of independent person-stages (but perhaps can be predicated of aggregates of stages). Now, while there exists an extensive plethora of properties that are seemingly predicated of human beings essentially, the specific property that I propose we turn to is our unique capacity for *discursive reasoning* (or rationality). In other words, the question we ought to ask the stage-theorist is as follows: Given that rationality is a property that is essentially predicated of a human being, then is it possible for this property to be also predicated of an independent person-stage?

Of course, one ought to note that rationality is an extremely multifaceted property that can be understood via a variety of distinct aspects. For instance, different subject fields seem to appeal to different aspects of rationality under different contexts to denote different behaviours that belong to human beings. Given that this is the case, which context-specific aspect of rationality should we consider for our current purpose of rejecting the stage-view? The answer to this should not be surprising: It is absolutely imperative that we ought to focus on the most general notion of *rationality* qua *rationality* instead of dividing our attention in a futile attempt to cover all the context-specific aspects of rationality. After all, it is clear that the different context-specific aspects of rationality all refer to the same general process of discursive reasoning, albeit under different sets of axioms (e.g., financial rationalism corresponds to the axioms of economics, while moral rationalism corresponds to the set of moral axioms). Henceforth, if we show that the general capacity for discursive reasoning cannot be predicated of independent person-stages, then it logically follows that all context-specific aspects of rationality also cannot be predicated of independent person-stages.

Moving onwards, we must now define discursive reasoning. Generally speaking, discursive reasoning is commonly identified as an active process in which the subject of reason is consciously drawing a series of logical inferences from new or existing information with the intent of attaining a specific end (which can either be the attainment of a new mental state or the production of a certain action). Furthermore, the process may be either (1) *deductive* if the subject of reason is specifically drawing logical inferences directly from a cognitively internal set of logical axioms and known concepts, or (2) *inductive*

⁶See Sider (2011), 193. This is Sider's infamous theory of temporal counterparts.

if the subject of reason draws upon new information from the external world and construes it as probability to be used in logical inference. Another way to think about discursive reasoning is that one can analogously characterize it as a “game of matching” in which the participant is using a set of logical axioms either (1) to “match up” two or more distinct yet interrelated concepts that are cognitively internal to the participant (e.g., to identify an internal relationship between Threeness and Oddness), or (2) to “match up” externally received sense-data with known concepts (e.g., to identify a physical shape in the external world as a triangle or a rectangle).

Given that discursive reasoning is so defined, it necessarily follows that even the most minimalistic instance of discursive reasoning must always be a process that is complex. This claim should not be philosophically problematic: If discursive reasoning is nothing but the process of drawing logical inferences from either our external world or our internal database of abstracted concepts and logical axioms, then even the most simplistic process of reasoning must have two basic steps: (1) The recognition and (2) the inference (e.g., upon perceiving redness, we must first recognize that the object of perception is something in the genus of colors, and then draw an inference from our internal database of colors to match the redness that is perceived). Furthermore, given that discursive reasoning is always a complex procedure, it also follows it is always a temporally extended procedure. This should also be relatively unproblematic: If a process is complex in the sense that it is composed of a connected sequence of steps (viz. sequences of logical inferences) that lead from one to the other, then there ought to be a temporal displacement between the start of the sequence and the end of the sequence (however small that displacement may be).

There is a more controversial condition for discursive reasoning that I propose should also be accepted. Namely, if discursive reasoning operates as a process that is *private* in nature, then it seems intuitive to posit the following claim: In all cases of discursive reasoning, it is necessarily the case that there can be only *one* subject of reason that underlies one entire process of reasoning. In other words, if discursive reasoning is necessarily a temporally extended procedure, then the subject of reason must be an entity that *endures* the extended procedure. The argument for this claim comes in the form of a simple thought experiment. Suppose that we have a situation in which an individual named Bob begins a train of reasoning at T_1 which ends at T_2 , and then a numerically distinct individual named Joe begins a separate train of reasoning at T_2 which ends at T_3 . Now, suppose that the Bob’s train of reasoning at T_1 and Joe’s train of reasoning at T_2 are objectively connected (in the sense that while they did not communicate with one another, Joe’s thoughts are a miraculous continuation of Bob’s thoughts). In this situation, could we say that Bob and Joe were engaged in one single overarching process of discursive reasoning that was started by Bob and completed by Joe? I suppose not: Bob was engaged in his own process of reasoning and Joe was engaged in his own process of reasoning, so there were two numerically distinct processes of rea-

soning. The intuitive reason behind this, I presume, is that Bob and Joe are not mentally continuous with one another in the same way that two person-stages of a single individual are mentally continuous with one another; since Bob and Joe are not two temporal instantiations of the same individual at two different times, there ought to be two reasoning processes instead of one.

Let us now return to the question of whether or not rationality can be properly predicated of independent person-stages. From the previous discussion on rationality, I have suggested that there are at least three conditions regarding discursive reasoning that ought to hold.

- (i) Discursive reasoning must be a complex procedure.
- (ii) Discursive reasoning must be a temporally extended procedure.
- (iii) There must be a one-to-one correspondence between a subject of reason and a single process of reasoning.

Conditions (i) and (ii) are unproblematic for a stage-theorist if we consider (i) and (ii) by themselves. Condition (i) can be fulfilled by simply claiming that each logical inference within the complex procedure is completed by a single person-stage. More specifically, a stage-theorist may say that while each person-stage is an independent bundle of mental data, the extended collection of these bundles of data corresponds to a process of discursive reasoning. Condition (ii) can be fulfilled by the stage-theorist in the same way condition (i) is fulfilled; namely, by claiming that while no single person-stage completes the process of discursive reasoning, an extended collection of person-stages can complete the process of reasoning.

Condition (iii) is where the trouble begins for any stage-theorists who wish to claim that rationality can be properly predicated of independent person-stages that are strictly anchored to their respective temporal slices. Specifically, if there must be a one-to-one correspondence between a subject of reason and a single process of reasoning, then stage-theorists cannot validly assert that each individual person-stage is the proper subject of reason simply on the basis that it is an incidental component of an extended collection of independent person-stages that more properly participated in the extended process of reasoning. After all—going back to the previous thought experiment—just as Bob and Joe are two separate subjects of reason who correspond to two numerically distinct processes of reasoning, two individual person-stages must also correspond to two different processes of reasoning (if they can be considered subjects of reason at all). However, given conditions (i) and (ii), it ought to be clear that no single person-stage can be properly called a subject of reason: Given that discursive reason is a process that is temporally extended, no independent person-stage may engage in this process without overlapping into another person-stage.

Furthermore, it is also clear that any appeals to Sider's temporal counterpart theory do not help the stage-theorist out-manuever the problem. To summarize, the temporal counterpart theory is meant to offer a reductive account

of how independent person-stages can have certain *de re* properties that, *prima facie*, cannot belong to them due to their being anchored to specific temporal slices. For instance, an independent person-stage X_1 , while being anchored to the temporal slice T_2 , can nonetheless “have” the attribute of existing at T_2 simply in virtue of: (a) There existing an independent person-stage X_2 that properly exists at T_2 , and (b) X_2 being a temporal counterpart of X_1 .

Now while the appeal to temporal counterparts is quite powerful in explaining how you (*qua* person-stage) can have certain attributes that more properly belong to your temporal counterparts, it is powerless in explaining how you (*qua* person-stage) can have certain attributes that do not belong to your temporal counterparts at all! After all, the stage-theorist cannot claim that rationality is a property that can be properly predicated of an individual person-stage X_1 just on the basis that X_1 stands in a temporal counterpart relation with another person-stage X_2 . The reason why the stage-theorist cannot assert this claim is that there simply does not exist a person-stage X_2 that has the property of rationality at all. In fact, as I have argued in the previous paragraph, it is strictly impossible for rationality to be predicated of any person-stages in the proper sense.

Now of course, it is also possible for the stage-theorist to straight-up deny condition (iii) and claim that there does not need to be a one-to-one correspondence between a subject of cognition and a single process of reasoning. Perhaps the stage-theorist will claim that our knowledge regarding how discursive reasoning functions is fundamentally flawed and that it is philosophically unproblematic to claim that multiple individuals may underlie one single process of discursive reasoning. After all, condition (iii) is a claim that relies heavily upon on our intuition that Joe and Bob are not engaged in a single, extended process of discursive reasoning. However, as the stage-theorist may rightfully point out, an appeal to intuition cannot stand by itself as the proper justification for a claim: It might very well be the case that our intuition is flawed and that Joe and Bob can in fact be engaged in a single extended process of discursive reasoning. Thus, since condition (iii) is philosophically unjustified, it ought to be discarded as a condition for discursive reasoning. In that case, it seems, *prima facie*, that the stage-theorist will have no problem in predicating rationality of individual person-stages.

I am willing to stand with the stage-theorist and discard condition (iii) as a condition for discursive reasoning; however, I do not think simply discarding condition (iii) allows the stage-theorist to properly predicate rationality of individual person-stages. The reason for this is that we ought to make a proper distinction between:

- (I) The *passive possession of information-data* and
- (II) the *active process of rational reflection* that occurs when a subject of reason is actually making use of the pre-existing information-data and drawing logical inferences to establish new conclusions.

Given this distinction, it should be clear that while (I) is required as a necessarily pre-requisite for proper discursive reasoning to occur, (I) does not amount to discursive reasoning *simpliciter*. After all, although every book and computer in the world passively possesses a good amount of information-data, no one would dare to claim that books and computers are subjects of reason that engaged in a proper process of discursive reasoning. Hence, it ought to be clear that discursive reasoning is not equivalent to simply possessing information-data, but rather it is the active process of reflecting on these pre-existing information-data that are already possessed by the subject of reason.

Once we make this distinction clear, the stage-theorist is once again in deep waters. After all, similar to books and computers, while it is possible for independent person-stages to passively possess bundles of information-data, it is impossible for any independent person-stage to engage in the active reflection of these information-data without overlapping into another independent person-stage (this is because reflection is necessarily a temporally extended and complex procedure). In other words, although independent person-stages each fulfill the requirement for discursive reasoning to take place, it is never the case that they are actually engaged in the process of discursive reasoning (which is specifically the process of reflection, and not simply passively possessing information data). Indeed, if anything can be engaged in the process of active reflection at all, then it must be the temporally extended aggregate of mentally continuous person-stages. To conclude, even if we do discard condition (iii) for discursive reasoning, the stage-theorist still cannot claim that rationality can be predicated of independent person-stages given that discursive reasoning is the process of active reflection and not the passive possession of information-data.

Now finally, the stage-theorist might take a step further by arguing that rationality can be predicated of an independent person-stage in virtue of the fact that the specific person-stage has the “property” of being a temporal part of a temporally extended aggregate of person-stages that most properly endures the entire process of discursive reason. This, however, will also amount to admitting that individual person-stages do in fact compose an aggregate that has enough ontological significance to be counted as a single entity that is continuant through time. Given that the central claim of the stage-theory is that individual person-stages do not compose any temporally continuant and ontologically significant aggregates,⁷ it would be self-refuting for any stage-theorist to take this approach to avoid the problem of discursive reasoning.

On a further note, it also does not seem philosophically correct to claim that rationality can be predicated of an independent person-stage simply in virtue the fact it is a temporal part of an aggregate of person-stages that endures the process of discursive reason. After all, it is simply not the case that an activity of a composite is also an activity that belongs to each individual component of the composite. For example: During the activity of running, it

⁷See Sider (2011), 191.

is clear that spatial parts of the composite body are performing the necessary steps required for the activity. The legs are moving back and forth, establishing contact with the ground and keeping the body up straight. At the same time, the heart is pumping blood and oxygen to the parts of the body which require energy to continue the action of running. In this case, can we say running is an activity that belongs to the legs *per se*? Even more absurd, if organs such as the heart and the lungs are also engaged in the process, are they also running? Probably not: The intuition behind this is that while the spatial parts of a composite are required for the activity of running, running itself is an activity that belongs only to the bodily composite that is the aggregate of these parts.

From the discussion above, it seems to me (at least at the current moment) that there is nothing that the stage-theorist may appeal to so that rationality can be miraculously predicated of independent person-stages. Hence, we may formulate the following two conclusions:

C_1 : Rationality can be predicated of an ontologically significant and temporally extended aggregate of person-stages.

C_2 : Rationality cannot be predicated of independent person-stages that are strictly anchored to their respective temporal slices.

From these two conclusions, we may deduce that since rationality is not a property that can be predicated of independent person-stages (but can be predicated of an aggregate of person-stages), then human beings cannot be identical to independent person-stages. This conclusion, combined with Lewis's original argument that a person is a *maximal aggregate of R-related stages*, shows that a human being must be a maximal aggregate of person-stages and not just a single, temporally bounded person-stage.

REFERENCES

- Aristotle, *De Anima*. Translated by W. S. Hett, Harvard University Press, 1957.
- Lewis, D., "The Paradox of Time Travel." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 2, (1976), pp. 145–152.
- , "Survival and Identity." *Philosophical Papers*, vol. 1, (1983), pp. 55–77.
- Olson, E., *What Are We?* Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Parfit, D., "Personal Identity." *Philosophical Review*, vol. 80, (1971), pp. 3–27.
- Sider, T., "All the World's a Stage." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 74, no. 3, (1996), pp. 433–453.
- , "Four-Dimensionalism." *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 106, no. 2, (1997), pp. 197–231.
- , *Four-Dimensionalism: An Ontology of Persistence and Time*. Clarendon, 2011.

NOĒSIS XVIII

FUZZY EPISTEMIC LOGIC

EN HUA HU

Current epistemic logic models are mostly limited to either binary or probabilistic interpretations of knowledge. The author presents a logic that allows for degrees or strength of knowledge independent of probabilities. Namely, the author assigns fuzzy values to both the atomic propositions and accessibility relationships. The author first discusses why a fuzzy approach is necessary in some scenarios then presents the static and dynamic versions of the logic. Lastly, the author uses the logic to model a logically non-omniscient agent's knowledge over a decidable theory to illustrate the usefulness and some philosophical issues of the logic.

Key Words: Epistemic Logic, Fuzzy Logic, Logical Omniscience

INTRODUCTION

Fuzzy logic is a branch of non-classical logics. In fuzzy logic, propositions have truth values from $[0,1]$. Therefore, it is a type of many-valued logic. Although fuzzy logic was worked on by Łukasiewicz, Tarski, and Gödel, it is not until Zadeh (1965), "Fuzzy Sets," that the modern interpretation of 'fuzziness' was introduced.

For Zadeh, fuzzy was not to mean degree of uncertainty, but rather degree of vagueness. The idea is that objects may possess properties to degrees rather than in an absolute manner. For instance, '17°C is hot' would be either true or false in classical logic. However, a fuzzy logician would give it a number in $[0,1]$ to denote how hot 17°C is.

In this paper, one goal is to argue that fuzzy logic can describe epistemic phenomena that binary and probabilistic approaches have a hard time doing. Another goal is to show that a model of fuzzy epistemic logic, in terms of modalities, is available and to present some of its subtleties via examples.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we briefly elaborate on the concept of fuzziness. Second, we explain why fuzzy epistemic logic is attractive and the

better option for certain scenarios. In this second section, we also argue why probabilistic approaches cannot be used as a substitute for those scenarios. Third, we introduce formally the basic model of fuzzy modal epistemic logic. We also show how this model can be expanded with a standard public announcement operator. Fourth, we analyze the problem of logical omniscience with our logic.

1 FUZZINESS AND DEGREES OF KNOWLEDGE

Fuzzy logic is not fuzzy. Basically, fuzzy logic is a precise logic of imprecision and approximate reasoning. —Zadeh (2008)

Before we proceed with showing why and how fuzzy truth values can be applied for the K -operator, we begin with a short exposition and motivation of fuzzy logic. In particular, we wish to clear some common misunderstandings one might have of ‘fuzziness’.

There are traditionally two counter-directional ways of interpreting the root of fuzziness. One views it as arising either out of the property which defines the fuzziness or out of the objects which fuzzily possess the property.

First, for instance, take the property of tallness. One can analyze its fuzziness in two ways: Either as a derivative of height or as derivative of the different tallness of different people. Similarly, take hotness: It may be fuzzy due to different temperatures or degrees. Lastly, in the case of strength of belief, it may arise out of some objective definition with degrees (such as probabilistic belief) or out of differences in strength between agents.

Of course, the two definitions are simply different ways of viewing the same concept, so it shouldn’t be surprising that one finds that they are not entirely distinct. Although fuzzy truth values usually range over $[0,1]$, one should not associate fuzziness with probabilities. Consider the sentence, ‘I will win the lottery’. We do have some probability that the sentence is true. However, this proposition is not true to some degree. Now, consider the sentence, ‘I am a young man’. This has no probabilistic meaning because the property of being young might take on fuzzy values.

Second, we do not commit to any particular definition of knowledge. Rather, we limit knowledge purely as described by the K -operator without any other ontological commitment. Therefore, when we refer to an agent’s degree of knowledge, it is most often context-dependent. In the next section, we use degree of knowledge within an intuitive understanding. However, in the last section, degree of knowledge represents the computational cost for deriving a proposition.

2 FUZZY OVER BINARY AND PROBABILITY

Over this section, we argue that there are scenarios where fuzzy epistemic K provides better descriptions than the binary or probabilistic counterpart.

2.1 Fuzzy over Binary

Consider the following sentence:

Ann knows logic better than Bob does.

Without declaring that Bob does not know logic, it is impossible for binary values to differentiate between Ann's and Bob's knowledge of logic. However, Ann could be a professor of logic and Bob her student. Would it really be fair to say that Bob does not know logic simply because there exists an individual who knows it better than he does?

There are two ways in which one might wish to respond to the above example:

1. Logic is a compound object. It is made up of many propositions, of which Ann knows more than Bob does.
2. Knowledge is not interpersonally comparable, just like utility.

Consider then the following sentences:

- i. Ann knows $1 + 1$ better than she knows $e = mc^2$.
- ii. Bob knows $e = mc^2$ better than he did before he completed his Ph.D. in physics.

One might argue that the above avoids both objections. Each sentence concerns a single agent and what seems to be atomic propositions. The purpose of the above example is to illustrate that the full context of epistemic propositions are sometimes not captured via binary truth values.

Another question one might have is the following. We know that fuzzy logic behaves exactly like classical logic for the truth values $\{0,1\}$. So could it be that the set of epistemic states which are well represented by binary values is a subset of those well represented by fuzzy logic? The answer to this question depends on the interpretation one wishes to impart on knowledge. For our examples, our implicit interpretation of knowledge is one which distinguishes between degrees. However, one might deny these distinctions and impose restrictions on what counts as knowledge such that degree differences are impossible.

2.2 Fuzzy and Probability

Whether fuzziness offers anything probability cannot is a controversial topic; the two clash on many other scenarios such as modelling uncertainty. For papers on this issue, see Kosko (1990) and Zadeh (2008) from the fuzzy camp and Lindley (1994) and Haack (1996) from the probabilistic camp. In the following section, we limit ourselves to degrees of knowledge and argue that fuzziness does offer something probability cannot.

The examples in the previous section, on their own, are good cases where a probabilistic approach might not offer the most intuitive representation. It is possible, of course, to represent the scenario in some roundabout way. Namely, Ann knows logic better than Bob does because she has a higher probability of knowing any arbitrary proposition of logic.

It is standard nowadays to take subjective probability as degrees of belief. Thus, unless we wish to argue that degrees of knowledge can be reduced to degrees of belief, one should not conceive of it via subjective probability. One might argue that by introducing degrees of knowledge, we have effectively weakened knowledge such that it really has become belief. However, we would argue that this is not the case. Considering our second example, there is a real difference in degrees of belief which might be very large depending on Ann's view of the external world, but the probabilistic difference is non-existent or rather small. Similarly, Bob's knowledge of $e = mc^2$ has changed, but surely his probabilistic belief has not changed (or not as much, depending on what he did for his Ph.D.).

Of course, we have not argued that degrees of knowledge are incompatible with probabilistic knowledge. In fact, one might need both to capture the full context of a scenario. Consider the following example:

- iii. Ann knows the probability of heads is 0.7 for some coin and so does Bob. However, Ann knows it better.

We see that degrees of knowledge and probability of knowledge can be used together very naturally. In fact, from iii., we can see that probability of knowledge cannot be equivalent to degrees of knowledge.

Using sloppy formalism, we can represent iii. as follows:

$$(E_1) \quad K_a(Prob_a(H)) \succ K_b(Prob_b(H))$$

Suppose one argues that they are indeed the same. If so, we can interchange the operators:

$$(E_2) \quad Prob_a(K_a(H)) \succ Prob_b(K_b(H))$$

But (E_1) and (E_2) mean drastically different things. There are scenarios where one is true but not the other. Suffice to consider iii. with the added assumption that Ann and Bob have the same degree of knowledge about the coin showing heads and assign the same probability to themselves having that degree of knowledge.

3 FUZZY EPISTEMIC LOGIC

Over this section, we present briefly the propositional calculi of fuzzy logic and classical modal epistemic logic and then move on to present the fuzzification of both static and dynamic epistemic logic.

3.1 Propositional Logic

In fuzzy logic, we have the following truth value assignment for the negation:

$$V(\neg p) = 1 - V(p)$$

We define the operation, \otimes , called the t-norm, to be the analogy of conjunction. The field of fuzzy logic uses not one t-norm but many. Here are the three fundamental t-norms from which all others can be derived:¹

1. $x \otimes_G y = \min\{x, y\}$, the Gödel t-norm.
2. $x \otimes_P y = x * y$, the product t-norm.
3. $x \otimes_L y = \max\{0, x + y - 1\}$, the Łukasiewicz t-norm.

For the above t-norms, we have classical behaviour for truth values 0 and 1. The disjunction is referred to in the literature as t-conorm or s-norm and is the dual of the t-norm. In particular, the implication rules derived from above are:

$$V(x \rightarrow y) = 1 \text{ if } x \leq y.$$

Here, x, y represent the truth values of the two propositions. This is a slight abuse of notation but not an ambiguous one.

If $x > y$, then the truth value of the implication differs depending on the choice of t-norm:

1. $V(x \rightarrow y) = y$, Gödel implication.
2. $V(x \rightarrow y) = \frac{y}{x}$, Product/Goguen implication.
3. $V(x \rightarrow y) = 1 - x + y$, Łukasiewicz implication.

3.2 Classical Model

It is mainstream to conceptualize the epistemic operator as a modality using possible world models. For a standard treatment of this, refer to Hendricks and Symons (2015). We briefly present the model here:

$$M = \langle W, R, V \rangle$$

Where W is the set of possible worlds. $R \subset W \times W$ is the accessibility relation between worlds. $V : p \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(W)$ is the valuation function over atomic propositions.

The following are truth conditions for non-atomic propositions:

1. $M, w \models \neg p \iff w \notin V(p)$

¹See Hájek (1998).

2. $M, w \models \phi \wedge \psi \iff M, w \models \phi \text{ and } M, w \models \psi$
3. $M, w \models K\phi \iff \forall v \in W, R(w, v) = 1 \text{ implies } M, v \models \phi$
4. $M, w \models [\phi]\psi \iff M, w \models \phi \text{ implies } M|_\phi, w \models \psi$

$[\phi]$ is the announcement operator. $[\phi]\psi$ is read as “after an announcement of ϕ , ψ holds.” Further, $M|_\phi$ is a ‘submodel’ of M where we take out all non- ϕ worlds and their accessibility relations.

Namely, the operator restricts the model where we evaluate our proposition to one where the announcement is true. Additionally, a few axioms of reduction and recursion come along with the operator to guarantee that expressivity and complexity result:

1. $[\phi]p \iff (\phi \rightarrow p)$
2. $[\phi]\neg\psi \iff (\phi \rightarrow \neg[\phi]\psi)$
3. $[\phi](\psi \wedge \chi) \iff ([\phi]\psi \wedge [\phi]\chi)$
4. $[\phi]K\psi \iff (\phi \rightarrow K[\phi]\psi)$

Static Fuzzy Modal Model

Our fuzzy model is the following:

$$M = \langle W, S, V \rangle$$

W is the set of possible worlds and S is a valuation function between possible worlds, namely $S : W \times W \rightarrow [0, 1]$. Lastly, $V : p \times w \rightarrow [0, 1]$ is the valuation function which tells us the fuzzy values of atomic propositions in different worlds.

Truth values for non-modal propositions are given by the t-norm according to the propositional rules. However, the truth function for $K\phi$ is more problematic. One standard approach from Bou *et al.* (2011) and Caicedo and Rodríguez (2015) is the following:

$$V(K\phi, w) = \inf\{S(w, v) \implies V(\phi, v) \mid v \in W\}$$

However, the above function will only validate the K -axiom if our logic uses the Gödel t-norm to calculate propositional truth values or if the accessibility relations are crisp.² The intuition here is that fuzziness of knowledge is not introduced via fuzziness of truth alone but depends closely on the accessibility relationship’s fuzziness. Namely, although K holds in a model with binary accessibility for all three t-norms, it is not desirable because it is not the case that partial knowledge depends on partial truth. Furthermore, an intuition we have from the model is that fuzzy knowledge is fuzzy not only in knowledge of proposition but also in relationships of known propositions.

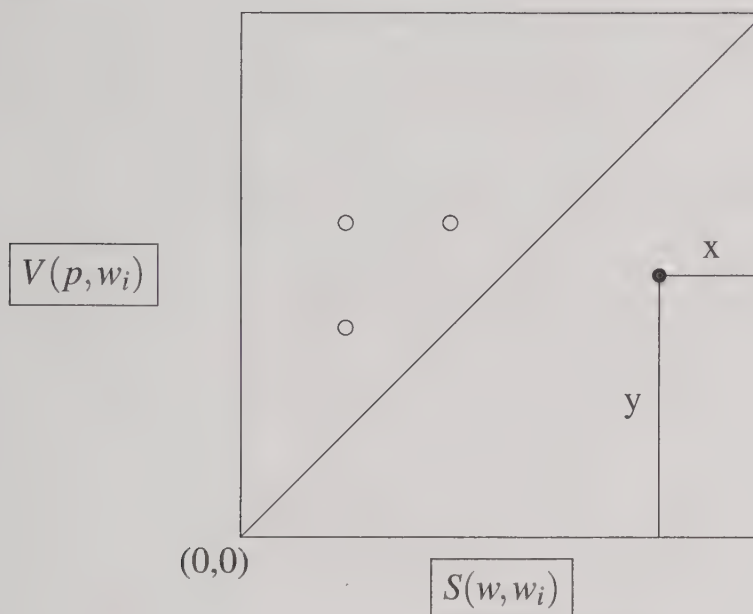
Note lastly that the implication function used to define $V(Kp, w)$ need not be the same implication function used in our model for propositions.

²See Bou *et al.* (2011).

Some Comments on the Truth Function Kp

Of course, we can choose other functions such that our model results in a normal logic regardless of accessibility relation or t-norm choice. For instance, $V(K\phi, w) = \inf\{S(w, v) * V(\phi, v)\}$ will do. However, the functions are often symmetric and lack intuition.

The author is of the belief that the right way of conceptualizing the modal truth function in a fuzzy model is that of a function f from the power set of $[0, 1] \times [0, 1]$ to $[0, 1]$. Namely, fix a world, v , and proposition, p , and consider the following graph:



The graph can be understood as follows. We have fixed the actual world w and proposition p . Each point (x, y) represents some possible pairs of $(V(p, w_i), S(w, w_i))$. Therefore, it is not hard to see that the truth function $V(Kp, w)$ takes subsets of the graph and maps it onto $[0, 1]$. As per traditional methods in fuzzy logic, when studying this type of function, we first define it over singletons then second take the infimum amongst the singletons of the set.

Our function assigns a score to each singleton as follows: If $S(w, w_i) \leq V(p, w_i)$, then it is equal to 1; if $S(w, w_i) > V(p, w_i)$, then it is equal to the following depending on the definition of $V(K\phi, w)$:

1. $x + y$ for Łukasiewicz implication
2. y for Gödel implication
3. $\frac{y}{1-x}$ for Product implication

Properties of Fuzzy- K

It is well known that if R satisfies some properties, then so will K in the classical model. In the following, we look at the other properties of K with respect to properties of the S -function.

We define the following relevant properties on S , mirroring the classical model:

1. **Reflexivity** $\forall w \in W, S(w, w) = 1$
2. **Transitivity** $\forall w_1, w_2, w_3 \in W, S(w_1, w_3) \geq \max\{S(w_1, w_2), S(w_2, w_3)\}$
3. **Seriality** $\forall w \in W, \exists v \in W, S(w, v) = 1$
4. **Euclidean** $\forall w_1, w_2, w_3 \in W, \min\{S(w_2, w_3), S(w_3, w_2)\} \geq \max\{S(w_1, w_2), S(w_1, w_3)\}$
5. **Symmetry** $\forall w_1, w_2 \in W, S(w_1, w_2) = S(w_2, w_1)$

The properties of S are reflected in the properties of the K -operators in ways analogous to the classical model:

- T** $V(K\phi \rightarrow \phi, w) = 1$ (True if reflexive)
- 4** $V(K\phi \rightarrow KK\phi, w) = 1$ (True if transitive)
- D** $V(K\perp, w) = 0$ (True if serial)
- 5** $V(\neg K\phi \rightarrow K\neg K\phi, w) = 1$ (True if euclidean)
- S** $V(\phi \rightarrow K\neg K\neg\phi, w) = 1$ (True if symmetric)

The above is a reflection of how the epistemic operator behaves specifically for fuzzy values, namely, the truth value of the consequent is always larger or equal to that of the antecedent. The proofs are entirely algebraic. One observation is the following: While the above will hold for any choice of t-norm for propositional evaluation, one needs a different set of definitions for the properties on S if one changes the truth function for Kp beyond the ones we have defined. Namely, Gounder and Esterline (1998) uses $V(K\phi, w) = \min\{\max\{1 - S(w, v), V(\phi, v)\}\}$, which does not validate **5** and **S**.

One conclusion at which the reader may arrive from the static model is that the Gödel t-norm is superior because it validates the K -axiom. However, that is not true: In the last section, we will give an example where the Gödel t-norm may not be preferable.

Given that degrees of knowledge change over time and are affected by events, it is natural to present a dynamic version of the model. As per usual, what we are looking for is an update or announcement operator.

Dynamic Fuzzy Model

Before we begin with our model, we note that Cabrer *et al.* (2016) presents a logic for PAL in the Łukasiewicz logic using a different approach. Now we introduce updates in our model. In classical logic, updates express dynamic change in the knowledge state of all agents. Similarly, our fuzzy update will do the same. However, a standard translation of the classical definition will not work here due to some complications with how false announcements are treated.

Instead, what we need to realize is that fuzzy updates are not just updates with fuzzy truth values. A fuzzy update is really an announcement of degrees with a truth value in degrees.

With that in mind, we define a fuzzy update as follows:

$$V([\phi]^x \psi, w) = V(a \rightarrow \phi, w) \implies V'(a \rightarrow \psi, w)$$

We read ' $[\phi]^x \psi$ ' as "After an announcement of ϕ to x degrees, ψ is at least x ," where ' a ' is a constant with truth value $x \in [0, 1]$ and V' the truth function in the updated model.

We define the updated model, M' , after an announcement of degree x of ϕ as follows:

$$M' = \langle W', V', S' \rangle \quad (1)$$

$$S'(w, v) = S(w, v) \otimes V(a \rightarrow \phi, v) \quad (2)$$

We define the new set of worlds $W' = \{w \in W \mid \min\{S(v, w)\} > y\}$ and we call y the agent's updating degree. Lastly, V' is simply V restricted to W' and S' .

With the classical model, it suffices to determine the new set of accessibility relationships which holds after the update and rule out all isolated worlds. However, with the fuzzy model, this is not always intuitive. Rather, it is necessary to manually remove worlds. This act can be understood as how serious the agent takes the announcement to be. Notice that we do still always rule out worlds which have $V(\phi, w) = 0$. One might be tempted to equalize the degree of announcement with the agent's updating degree; however, with different t-norms, the approach is not particularly insightful.

We must note that the updating operation defined as above makes it possible to eliminate the actual world. However, that will not be true for reflexive accessibility relations.

It is possible to find the following reduction axioms for any updating degree if we take the Gödel t-norm. However, the same is not true for others:

1. $[\phi]^x p \iff (a \rightarrow \phi) \rightarrow (a \rightarrow p)$
2. $[\phi]^x \neg \psi \iff (a \rightarrow \phi) \rightarrow (a \rightarrow \neg \psi)$
3. $[\phi]^x (\psi \wedge \chi) \iff [\phi]^x \psi \wedge [\psi]^x \chi$
4. $[\phi]^x K \psi \iff (a \rightarrow \phi) \rightarrow K[\phi]^x \psi$

4 LOGICAL OMNISCIENCE

In this section, we show how a fuzzy model can faithfully model a non-omniscient agent's knowledge over a decidable theory. It is well known that the choice of t-norm is important for the standard application of fuzzy logic.³ We use this example to illustrate why the choice of t-norm is extremely important for epistemic logic and why the Gödel t-norm is not always the best choice, despite it having many classical properties.

The problem of logical omniscience is well known. Briefly speaking, an agent is logically omniscient if the agent knows all logical implications of the propositions the agent knows. We model here an agent who knows all axioms but does not know all logical implications.

Informally, we study an agent's knowledge of a decidable theory with finite axioms. Namely, the agent starts with full knowledge of the axioms and the rules for derivation. The theory's being decidable implies that a logically omniscient agent with the set-up would know all the truths of the theory. However, our fuzzy agent is one who incurs a computational cost that may be non-zero for every derivation, so we can show that he is not logically omniscient.

4.1 The Set-Up

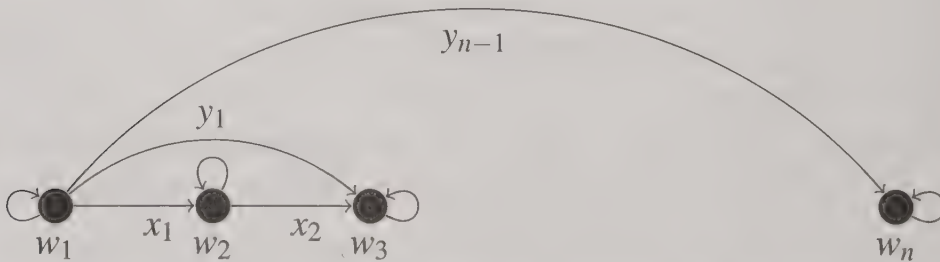
Let T be a decidable theory with finite axioms. Let our agent be one who knows all axioms of T but has only finite computational power.

We take the value of $K\phi$ to be the amount of computational power necessary for the agent to derive ϕ . If it is 0, then ϕ is beyond the agent's abilities. Alternatively, if $V(K\phi, w) = 1$ then the agent knows ϕ for free.

Suppose further that each proposition $\phi \in T$ is a step in a proof and the computational power necessary for the agent to derive ϕ is an increasing function of the numbers of steps ϕ corresponds to in the proof.

4.2 The Solution

We model the agent's knowledge as the following:



The above is a very simple model for what might be an agent's knowledge state of one particular sequence of steps in a proof. Denote the steps of the proof by $C = \{\phi_1, \phi_2, \dots, \phi_n, \dots\}$. The model is as follows:

³See Kreinovich and Nguyen (2006).

- For W and V :

1. w_1 is the actual world; all propositions of T are true in w_1 .
2. w_i , where $i \neq 1$, is defined recursively as follows:
 - (a) $V(\phi_1, w_2) \leq 1$ and $V(\phi_k, w_2) = 1, \forall k > 2$
 - (b) $V(\phi_2, w_3) \leq V(\phi_1, w_3) \leq 1$ and $V(\phi_k, w_3) = 1, \forall k > 3$
 - (c) $V(\phi_n, w_{n+1}) \leq \dots \leq V(\phi_1, w_{n+1}) \leq 1$ and $V(\phi_k, w_{n+1}) = 1, \forall k > n + 1$
 - (d) If $\phi_k = \phi_n, n > k$ then $V(\phi_n, w_i) = 1, \forall i \geq n$
 - (e) If $\psi \in T$ but $\psi \notin S$ then $V(\psi, w_i) = 1, \forall i$

- For S :

1. We first define the t-conorm (strong disjunction), \oplus , dual of the t-norm:
 - (a) Gödel: $x \oplus_G y = \max\{x, y\}$
 - (b) Product: $x \oplus_P y = x + y - xy$
 - (c) Łukasiewicz: $x \oplus_L y = \min\{x + y, 1\}$
2. Let $x_i = x_j > 0, \forall i, j$. We assume that the steps are equally costly.
3. Let $y_k = x_1 \oplus x_2 \dots \oplus x_{k+1}$

Notice that as k increases, ϕ_k 's truth values become lower and the value of $S(w_1, w_{k-1})$ increases. Therefore, unless it has been proved earlier, the further down a proposition is in a proof, the more costly it is. However, if it appears in two proofs, then the agent's knowledge of it will be the cost of the proof where it appears later since we take the infimum. This means that our agent will always verify every proof. Alternatively, had we wished to model an agent which finds the quickest proof, we will need to specify for any proof C , that if $\phi \in C$ appears in another proof at an earlier stage n , then the truth value of ϕ is 1 at every stage after n .

4.3 The Analysis

In the following, when we refer to any of the three t-norms, we refer to a logic where the same t-norm is used at the propositional, epistemic, and public announcement level.

While the fact that the K -axiom holds within the Gödel logic may be an indication of it being an unlikely candidate to solve the problem, one might argue that the agent has partial knowledge of logical implications. Therefore, we consider some slightly more interesting propositions such as $K\phi \wedge K\psi$ and $K\phi \rightarrow K\psi$. Their respective interpretations should be the following: Conjunction is the sum of costs taking away similarities between the derivations of ϕ and ψ . Implication is the cost of ψ with knowledge of ϕ to some degree. With

respect to those two types of propositions and their interpretations, it is also possible to see why the Gödel t-norm is inadequate.

Notice that the Gödel t-norm $V(K\phi \wedge K\psi, w) = \min\{K\phi, K\psi\}$ claims that the cost of knowing a conjunction is simply the largest of two costs; namely, it assumes that the derivation of the more costly proposition includes that of the less costly one. However, that may not be the case for our theory T . Looking at the Łukasiewicz and product t-norms, their interpretations are not necessarily more intuitive. Namely, the product t-norm claims that the cost is the products of the costs, but then the cost of $K\phi$ is somehow lower than $K\phi \wedge K\psi$. Of course there are such agents, but in general it is not intuitive. The Łukasiewicz t-norm suffers from a similar flaw.

Consider now the implication function. Under the Gödel t-norm, the implication says that $K\phi \rightarrow K\psi$ is free if $K\phi$ is more costly than $K\psi$, while $K\phi \rightarrow K\psi$ costs the same as $K\psi$ if otherwise. Again, there seems to be the assumption that costlier propositions includes those that cost less. Furthermore, we see that if $K\phi$ costs less than $K\psi$ then it contributes nothing to the derivation of $K\psi$, so the relationship between cost transfer is only one-directional.

However, implication does not capture the logical connection between propositions. Namely, $K\chi \rightarrow K\psi$ has the same cost as $K\phi \rightarrow K\psi$ as long as the cost of $K\chi$ is equal to $K\phi$. That said, ϕ may directly imply ψ while χ is not related to ψ . Note further that this will be true regardless of t-norm and model.

In our model, logical implication and the agent's knowledge of it are characterized by $[\phi]^x$. How ought one understand the meaning of an announcement and its update with the current model? The interpretation for the update $[\phi]^x$ should be seen as one of consolidation. Namely, after having derived $[\phi]^x$, agents strengthen their knowledge of $[\phi]^x$ by reducing its cost for future derivations. The higher the degree of announcement and the updating degree, the less costly ϕ becomes. We see further that $[\phi]^x K\psi$ and $[\phi]^x K\chi$ will have different values depending on the logical implication between the three propositions if our model properly captures it.

CONCLUSION

In our paper, we argued as to why fuzziness is an inherent and necessary part of characterizing certain types of knowledge. We then developed a logic for both the static and dynamic version of the logic while denoting some subtleties. Most notably, many classical epistemic properties only hold for the Gödel t-norm. However, this is not necessarily an indication that the Gödel t-norm is a more natural interpretation of fuzzy knowledge. Rather, it seems that the Gödel t-norm is the logic of knowledge of fuzzy propositions, not the logic of fuzzy knowledge. This claim is backed up by the fact that the Gödel t-norm does not have partial knowledge without partial atomic propositions.

Some further points which we did not have time to explore are the following:

- First, we would like to know more about the expressivity and decidability of the logics. Although Bou *et al.* (2011) does have some results regarding this, we do not know much about the dynamic version of the logic.
- A second point of interest is a logic which uses different t-norms. For instance, it may use one t-norm for its propositional formulae, another for defining K , and yet another public announcement. We have already seen from the last section that different t-norms model different ways an agent derives particular formulae. It could very well be that the agent's way of knowing uses a different t-norm than the agent's way of dealing with public announcements.
- Lastly, we also wish to explore further generalization of fuzzy epistemic logic in topological and neighborhood semantics as in Cintula *et al.* (2016).

REFERENCES

- Bou, F., F. Esteva, *et al.*, “On the Minimum Many-Valued Modal Logic over a Finite Residuated Lattice.” *Journal of Logic and Computation*, vol. 21, (2011), pp. 739–790.
- Cabrer, L., U. Riveccio, *et al.*, “Łukasiewicz Public Announcement Logic, Information Processing and Management of Uncertainty in Knowledge-Based Systems.” In J. Carvalho and M. J. Lesot (Editors), *Information Processing and Management of Uncertainty in Knowledge-Based Systems*, vol. 611, 2016, pp. 108–122.
- Caicedo, X. and R. O. Rodríguez, “Bi-modal Gödel logic over $[0,1]$ -valued Kripke frames.” *Journal of Logic and Computation*, vol. 25, no. 1, (2015), pp. 37–55.
- Cintula, P., C. Noguera, *et al.*, “From Kripke to neighborhood semantics for modal fuzzy logics.” In *International Conference on Information Processing and Management of Uncertainty in Knowledge-Based Systems*, Springer, pp. 95–107.
- Gounder, R. S. and A. C. Esterline, *Fuzzy versions of epistemic and deontic logic*. Ph.D. thesis, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, 1998.
- Haack, S., *Deviant logic, fuzzy logic: beyond the formalism*. University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Hájek, P., *Metamathematics of fuzzy logic*, vol. 4. Springer Science and Business Media, 1998.

- Hendricks, V. and J. Symons, “Epistemic Logic.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/logic-epistemic/>.
- Kosko, B., “Fuzziness vs. probability.” *International Journal of General Systems*, vol. 17, no. 2-3, (1990), pp. 211–240.
- Kreinovich, V. and H. T. Nguyen, “Which fuzzy logic is the best: Pragmatic approach (and its theoretical analysis).” *Fuzzy sets and Systems*, vol. 157, no. 5, (2006), pp. 611–614.
- Lindley, D. V., “Comments on ‘The efficacy of fuzzy representations of uncertainty’.” *IEEE Transactions on Fuzzy Systems*, vol. 2, no. 1, (1994), p. 37.
- Zadeh, L. A., “Fuzzy sets.” *Information and Control*, vol. 8, no. 3, (1965), pp. 338–353.
- , “Is there a need for fuzzy logic?” *Information Sciences*, vol. 178, no. 13, (2008), pp. 2751–2779.

“I HAVE REASON AND YOU HAVE NONE:” RAMSEY AND WITTGENSTEIN ON ETHICS

MEGAN S. H. TAN

A passage made by Ramsey to the *Apostles* is unpacked in light of Ramsey’s and Wittgenstein’s differing views of the possibility of ethics as a normative science. Although both philosophers recognize the futility in finding absolute fixers of meaning, Wittgenstein despairs over the inaccessibility of the mysterious but important, while Ramsey is excited to find grounds for a normative ethics in the pragmatist account of truth. By unravelling the layers of meaning behind Ramsey’s simple, yet packed, remark, “I have reason and you have none,” this paper sheds light on Wittgenstein’s and Ramsey’s contrasting worldviews, which are based on different attitudes towards how questions of value could be addressed in a world of facts.

Key Words: Wittgenstein, Ramsey, Pragmatism

INTRODUCTION

I find, just now at least, the world a pleasant and exciting place. You may find it depressing; I am sorry for you, and you despise me. But I have reason and you have none; you would only have a reason for despising me if your feeling corresponded to the fact in a way mine didn’t. But neither can correspond to the fact. The fact is not in itself good or bad; it is just that it thrills me but depresses you. On the other hand, I pity you with reason, because it is pleasanter to be thrilled than to be depressed, and not merely pleasanter but better for all one’s activities.

—Ramsey, “On There Being No Discussable Subject”

The above passage delivered by Ramsey to the *Apostles* can be seen to summarize his view of ethics in contrast to “some of his friends,” namely Russell and Wittgenstein. The kind of ethics that Ramsey is addressing here refers to

what Wittgenstein expresses in his *A Lecture on Ethics* as the general inquiry into what is valuable, good, important, or meaningful for life. By unpacking the passage above, I hope to discuss how their contrasting attitudes towards ethics, namely one of depression for Wittgenstein, and optimism for Ramsey, are motivated by different views of the possibility of a normative science, the possibility of finding value in a world of facts. I shall begin with a preparatory discussion of the motivations behind Wittgenstein's despair and contempt for Ramsey. I then try to explicate what Ramsey means by "I have reason and you have none," as in why Ramsey thinks himself justified in "finding the world a pleasant and exciting place" and therefore pities Wittgenstein with reason. I shall explain that Wittgenstein's despair originates from an inability to meaningfully address anything of absolute value and that his criticism is directed at Ramsey's attempt to speak the unspeakable by reducing the absolutely significant to (what Wittgenstein thinks are) trivial and relative facts of science. Ramsey, however, thinks that with a pragmatist account of truth, we do have grounds to take ordinary value statements as cognitively meaningful and normative and that a science that evaluates actions and dispositions in terms of their success in the world is capable of addressing meaningful questions of value.

1

Wittgenstein and Ramsey both realize that it is an impossible task to look for absolute guarantors of value. Their attitudes differ, however, in how they respond to this impossibility.

Wittgenstein's *A Lecture on Ethics* differentiates between two senses of ethics: The absolute sense, in which the meaning of things is guaranteed by some external fixer, and the trivial or relative sense, in which meaning is composed or constructed by an object's relation to other objects. Wittgenstein observes that a judgement of value, as it can always be reduced to a conjunction of descriptive facts, is always in the relative sense. For example, when I say, "Spotty is a good cow," what I really mean is that Spotty produces a lot of milk and that helps my business. Similarly, if I say that someone is a good person, what I really mean is that the person exhibits certain behaviours that I take to be desirable. If another person comes along and says, "From what I know about him he is not a good person at all," we may argue about it, but when we really flesh out what each of us is trying to express, we find that our disagreement results not from one of us being objectively wrong, but from different standards being applied in the evaluation—we are describing different things. Imagine if I want to insist that he is a good person in the absolute sense; Wittgenstein would say, "Well, what do you mean by that?" If I attempt to make myself clear by telling him all the reasons I have for making that judgement, I would find that it eventually crumbles into a conjunction of descriptions that no longer look like a value statement at all. Over the course of the lecture, Wittgenstein examines several attempts at making ethical statements

of an absolute nature and comes to the following conclusion: “Our words used as we use them in science, are vessels capable only of containing and conveying... *natural* meaning and sense. Ethics, if it is anything, is supernatural and our words will only express facts.”¹ We cannot say what we mean when we talk about ethically important matters, and anything that we do say becomes trivial and relative; “... so far as facts and propositions are concerned there is only relative value and relative good, right, etc.”² When we make statements of ethics we can never mean it in the absolute sense.

Ramsey agrees with Wittgenstein on this front, as expressed by his saying, “... you would only have a reason for despising me if your feeling corresponded to the fact in a way mine didn’t. But neither can correspond to the fact. The fact is not in itself good or bad...”³ Ramsey’s rejection of absolute guarantors of value is informed by the redundancy theory of truth, where he shows that there is no separate problem of truth from the problem of judgment. When it comes to evaluating the truth of a proposition, *p*, asserting that ‘*p* is true’ is no different from asserting *p* itself; the truth predicate attached to a proposition is merely stylistic verbiage and does not attribute the property of truth to a statement. Ramsey holds that when we assert ‘*p* is true,’ what we are really expressing is a *belief* in *p*, and the truth of *p*, therefore, actually lies in the truth of my belief—this alternative view of truth, as shall be discussed in the next section, is exactly what allows for Ramsey to see the possibility of a normative ethics. Despite their shared acknowledgement of the impossibility in finding fixers of meaning beyond the natural realm, Wittgenstein and Ramsey differ drastically in how they think questions of value could be addressed.

Wittgenstein (post-Tractarian), despite being a forerunner in breaking down the link between meaning and absolute definition, does not want to give up on a realism that accounts for the inexpressible and unanalyzable. As discussed by Diamond (1996), the source of Wittgenstein’s philosophical struggle can be seen as perfectly captured by a remark he made against Ramsey: “Not empiricism and yet realism in philosophy, that is the hardest thing.”⁴ The hardest thing in philosophy, for Wittgenstein, is to understand the fantasy and futility in postulating fixers of meaning beyond the natural realm, and yet *still* look to realism, to believe in the existence of absolute values, however hopelessly beyond our grasp.⁵ Wittgenstein’s despair therefore stems from his insistence that absolute values, although unanalyzable, are important and deep questions of philosophy that should not be dismissed.

Ramsey, on the other hand, has no interest in the unanalyzable. Ramsey’s solution to the hard problem of philosophy is therefore to adopt a “realistic spirit” by turning away from the unanalyzable and look for an account of meaning in what is accessible to us in the natural realm. Ramsey, as I shall

¹Wittgenstein, *Lecture*, 7.

²Ibid 7.

³Ramsey, “Facts and Propositions,” 4.

⁴Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics*, 325.

⁵Diamond 69.

discuss in the next section, is interested in obtaining an unified account of truth based on human beliefs and actions; he wants to formulate a system in which questions of value can be addressed and evaluated based on facts. This realistic spirit of Ramsey, however, disgusts Wittgenstein in its “incapacity... for reverence”⁶ towards the unanalyzable but important matters. As Wittgenstein insists, “Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science.”⁷ By stressing “*not* empiricism,” Wittgenstein insists that important questions of value cannot be replaced by questions of fact. This is what gives rise to his criticism towards Ramsey, who is accused to be infected with the “loss of problem” syndrome⁸ in his ambition to solve all philosophical problems by means of an uniform system of science.

Hence, when Ramsey says, “I have reason and you have none”—as in, that he has reason for pitying Wittgenstein’s depressed worldview, while Wittgenstein is without reason in despising Ramsey—we must acknowledge that he is actually drawing on two different kinds of reason: The absolute or supernatural reason, which neither he nor Wittgenstein has, and the kind of reason that he does claim to have. He rejects the former, for there is no fact in the world that can attribute absolute value to either of their positions; with regard to the latter, I shall say that his reason for pitying Wittgenstein is quite distinct from any talk of absolute value.

2

Indeed, ethics in the absolute sense cannot be reduced to facts, but that does not mean that facts must be devoid of value. While Wittgenstein despises Ramsey for reducing the significant to the trivial, Ramsey pities Wittgenstein for not seeing that the trivial can possess normative value as well. Since we cannot seek for justification of value beyond our natural experience, experience is exactly where we shall look, and in it, Ramsey would say, we shall find grounds for genuine ethical inquiry. While Wittgenstein despairs over the inaccessibility of absolute value, Ramsey sees possibility of a normative ethics as grounded in the pragmatist account of truth.

Pragmatism, started by Peirce and James in the Metaphysical Club at Cambridge, Massachusetts, inspired Ramsey in Cambridge, England to formulate an account of truth, and a method of evaluating truth, in terms of human belief. As mentioned earlier, Ramsey sees the question of truth as equivalent to the question of belief. To the pragmatists, beliefs are cognitive attitudes with which we “meet the world,” meaning that a belief is a disposition to behave, or a commitment to some habits of action, according to which we operate in the world and receive feedback from experience.⁹ To believe that “this drink

⁶See McGuinness (2012).

⁷Wittgenstein, *Lecture*, 12.

⁸See Misak (2016), 455.

⁹Ramsey, “Facts and Propositions,” 5.

is poisonous” is to act *as if* this drink is poisonous—to refrain from drinking it—but this belief is true only if the drink is *indeed poisonous*. If I do drink it and nothing bad happens then I would know my belief was wrong and adjust accordingly. In this sense, the truth of a belief can be evaluated in terms of its success in meeting the world, in whether or not it agrees with experience. An absolutely true belief, therefore, is one that is indefeasible in the face of experience.

One can see that the pragmatist account of truth applies easily to factual statements, but does it also work for value statements? Can we be justified in attributing normative value to feelings based on the success of our beliefs? Ramsey would say, “Why not?” A factual belief, such as that the sky is usually blue, is responsive to our experience of physical phenomena; the belief is justified if I see that the sky is indeed blue most of the time. To what kind of experience is an ethical belief responsive? For example, if I believe that I should treat strangers with respect, what exactly in the world can confirm or deny the truth of this belief? I think Ramsey would agree with Wittgenstein that value statements can ultimately be reduced to descriptive statements of fulfilled purposes. A person is good if his behaviour fulfills certain expectations from people around that person; for example, men and women should enjoy equal rights because that contributes to an overall increased efficiency and pleasure in society. For statements that attribute value to the fulfillment of purposes, we merely have to look to the purposes described and investigate whether they are actually fulfilled.

But Ramsey would go a step further than Wittgenstein by pointing out that the ultimate purpose behind value statements seems to be the fulfillment of our own human desires. Increased efficiency in society is a good thing because *we desire it*. I should treat strangers with respect because it makes my life, as well as the lives of those around me, more enjoyable. If we push on by asking, “What makes Spotty a good cow?” we could trace down a list of facts, such as that she produces good milk, the milk helps my business, a prospering business makes me more money, with more money I can go travel... etc. But eventually we shall see that none of the descriptions in themselves make Spotty a good cow; the facts are only relevant to the value statement insofar as they are instances of fulfilled desires of *mine*. Spotty is a good cow because in such and such ways she brings me benefit or happiness. In this case, Ramsey reminds us of James for saying that the fulfillment of desires is legitimate justification for belief.¹⁰

Applying the pragmatist account of truth to beliefs about the meaning of life, we come to understand Ramsey’s reason for pitying Wittgenstein’s depressed view of life: “I pity you with reason, because it is pleasanter to be thrilled than to be depressed, and not merely pleasanter but better for all one’s activities.”¹¹ In other words, an optimistic outlook to life endows one with beliefs and habits of action that result in the fulfillment of more desires. The

¹⁰ See James (1891), section III.

¹¹ Ramsey, “On There Being No Discussable Subject.”

meaning of life is not objectively rich or void, but a belief in the world being a "pleasant and exciting place" is superior to a depressed view in that it is more conducive to a happy life. Ramsey is consistent in his endeavour to practice philosophy from a human perspective; human desires are the ultimate arbiter when it comes to questions of value, and ethical statements should be assessed and compared in terms of the amount of desires they can bring to satisfaction.

3

Wittgenstein might raise the objection that Ramsey's assessment of value still cannot do away with the problem of relativism, for desires are contingent and individualistic. A masochist finds pain rather enjoyable—does that make it O.K. for him to inflict pain upon others? I may personally take pleasure in a depressed worldview, just like you take pleasure in a positive one; is one method of obtaining pleasure superior to another? To this I can imagine Ramsey responding, "No, Wittgenstein, you are clearly suffering." But more seriously, Ramsey would need to address how a normative truth of ethics is possible or how the pragmatist account of truth is capable of fixing meaning beyond the relative sense.

If we remind ourselves of the pragmatist account of truth, we see that truth is what stands to experience. Truths are those beliefs that persist through encounters with the world. If we want to confirm a scientific hypothesis, for example, we need to test and see if it agrees with the physical phenomena of the world. How many confirming instances do we need to count the hypothesis as objectively true rather than coincidentally true? This is a hard problem, and the pragmatists do not intend to propose a magic formula for it. The best we can do, according to Peirce, is to accept and act on our current beliefs, but never stop testing them.¹² In this way the pragmatist account of truth is fallible; however, the true beliefs should stand, as they are reinforced, rather than rejected, by feedback from experience. The process of inquiry can thus be seen as converging towards a normative truth.

Ramsey thinks that such normative truth is also possible in the case of ethics. Ethical beliefs are evaluated according to the amount of satisfaction they bring to experience, and the unsatisfactory ones will be eliminated in the process of inquiry. If I believe that a complete disregard for other people's feelings is a good way of conducting life, then experience would not be very kind to me, and I would be forced to review and adjust my belief. Granted, many value statements are only relative; *I* think cheese is great, but it makes *you* sick. But when it comes to questions like the meaning of life and acceptable behaviour towards other people, more is at stake, for such a belief has consequences in a way broader range of behaviour, so it is susceptible to more feedback from experience. If we look to experience and consider the behaviours that are subject to ethical criticism, we find that they are behaviours

¹²See Peirce (1877) for his discussions on scientific investigation.

that have consequences in not only one but many people. It is not only one's own desires, but also the desires of others, that constitute the arbiters of value.

An ultimately true ethical belief, to the pragmatists, would therefore be a rule for meeting the world that not only is conducive to one's life, but is always conducive to the life of anyone who holds that belief in any time or circumstance. Given that experience is ongoing, so is the process of inquiry; our belief at any given moment is always subject to further feedback from future experience that might work to change it. However, as experience accumulates, we, as humans, are indeed capable of acquiring ethical beliefs that are closer and closer to the truth.

4

Ramsey's reason for thinking that his view of life is better than that of Wittgenstein is not that it works for *him*, but that it would also make *Wittgenstein* a lot happier were he to adopt the same view. Ramsey believes that anyone who is positive about life would lead an overall better life than those who are depressed, and therefore he pities Wittgenstein for holding a view that costs him opportunities of enjoying life to its fullest. Thus when Ramsey says to Wittgenstein, "I have reason and you have none," he means that neither of them has reason in the absolute sense—the world is neither depressing nor exciting in itself—but if they consider the kind of reason that they do have access to, namely, a human reason that evaluates truth based on the success of beliefs, then Ramsey has reason on his side. That said, Ramsey is often criticized for the starkness of his worldview for his dismissal of the important but mysterious. As Moore writes to Waterlow in 1931, "I think [Ramsey's] *Weltanschauung*, without objective values, is very depressing. Wittgenstein finds this too: he calls Ramsey a 'materialist'; and what he means by this is something very antipathetic to him. Yet he himself doesn't believe in objective values either! He thinks they're nonsense, but *important* nonsense."¹³ Thus, Ramsey and Wittgenstein can be seen as conflicting on what they consider to be meaningful inquiry. While Wittgenstein insists on an unattainable philosophical realism and finds repulsive the attempt to attribute normative value to facts, Ramsey takes ethics to be very much about facts, and takes pride in practicing philosophy from a strictly human perspective, in terms of which truth becomes tangible in the success of our beliefs.

REFERENCES

Diamond, C., "Realism and the Realistic Spirit." In *The Realistic Spirit: Wittgenstein, Philosophy, and the Mind*, The MIT Press, 1996, pp. 39–72.

¹³Paul (2012), 117.

James, W., "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life." *International Journal of Ethics*, vol. 1, no. 3, (1891), pp. 330–354.

McGuinness, B., "Foreword." In *Frank Ramsey: A Sister's Memoir*, Smith-Gordon, 2012, pp. vii–xiii.

Misak, C., *Cambridge Pragmatism*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Paul, M., *Frank Ramsey: A Sister's Memoir*. Smith-Gordon, 2012.

Peirce, C. S., "The Fixation of Belief." *Popular Science Monthly*, vol. XII, (1877), pp. 1–15.

Ramsey, F. P., "Facts and Propositions." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*.

———, "On There Being No Discussable Subject." In *Frank Plumpton Ramsey Papers, 1920-1930*, University of Pittsburgh Special Collections Department, 1925.

Wittgenstein, L., "A Lecture on Ethics." *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 74, no. 1, (1965), pp. 3–12.

———, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*. Blackwell, 1978.



NOĒSIS XVIII

BEING WITHOUT TIME: POSSIBILITY AS
EXISTENTIALE AND FURTHERING THE
PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION IN *BEING AND*
TIME

HOWARD WILLIAMS

The author argues that the ‘concept’ (or, in Heidegger’s terminology, *existentiale*) of possibility is a critical part of the unfinished third division of *Being and Time*. The author shows, by citing numerous instances of Heidegger’s view of possibility, that, as a matter of hermeneutics, it is likely that Heidegger himself considered possibility to play an important role in his investigation. The author argues that even if this is not true of Heidegger, the author’s interpretation of possibility is a strong inference to make given the analyses Heidegger does provide. To show this, the author explicates some of the relevant *existentiales* Heidegger did discuss and argues that this paper’s interpretation of possibility is implied by Heidegger’s *existentiales* or should be one amongst them. Finally, the author briefly suggests a couple of ways in which possibility would be explored in the third division, and also in later works such as *Letter on “Humanism”* and “A Question Concerning Technology.”

Key Words: Heidegger, Possibility, *Being and Time*

INTRODUCTION

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger makes novel forays into issues concerning phenomenology, existentialism, ontology, and time, all in service of answering what he called, “The question of the meaning of Being.”¹ The goal of this paper is to question how far Heidegger has answered this question and what, if anything, remains to be done. Clearly, there is yet some work to be completed, given that a whole third of the first book was planned and not finished,

¹Heidegger, *Being and Time* (SZ), 1.

in addition to a second book.² However, an inference from this particular fact that something more was planned and not completed does not itself tell us exactly what it is that is still outstanding, and it doesn't tell us the next step in undertaking that completion. In recent Heidegger scholarship (see Sheehan (2010)), *die Kehre* (the turn) is interpreted by some to mean that Heidegger's later thought makes a radical break from his early work in *Being and Time*, and thus the initial project cannot be finished. I instead argue that what has been completed thus far gives sufficient insight and clues at least as to what the next step in the investigation is to be. This would be re-interpreting *temporality* in terms of *possibility* once it has been rigorously analyzed in the fashion of the other *existentiales*³ and phenomena within the book. To start, I will explicate some of the terms and concepts that I will be using (sections 1–2). Then, I will argue that, given said analyses and Heidegger's own thoughts, there is still work to be done in regard to his initial question (section 3). Finally, I will argue that the *existentiale* of possibility is the next step in carrying the investigation further, and it demonstrates some of the ways in which it fills in the gaps and what further analysis would look like (section 4).

1 TERMINOLOGY

The most important terms for this paper are beings, Being,⁴ and the Being of human beings: *Dasein*. Roughly, a 'being' is somewhat synonymous with a 'thing': An animal, person, rock, tool, etc. 'Being' is the way a thing occupies time or is significant. *Dasein* is the term used to refer to the Being of a human being specifically (e.g., not a rock, plant, house, or animal). It is only *Dasein* that exists, in that the world around them has significance for them, or *Dasein* that is temporal.

2 UNDERSTANDING AND DISCLOSURE

From the beginning, Heidegger tells us that time is going to be the ultimate horizon from which to understand or see the Being of *Dasein*.⁵ Thus, we rely on a couple crucial passages in the fifth division, Being-in-as-such (see footnote 4) to determine what is involved in any act of understanding whatsoever before we ask about what sort of understanding of temporality we have arrived at by the end of the book. Now, an immediate objection that could be raised is that the discussion of understanding comes after Heidegger's analysis of

²SZ 39-40. The third division of the first book was to be "Time and Being," while the second book was to handle the question of temporality in comparison with Kant, Descartes, and Aristotle.

³*Existentiale* is a technical term used by Heidegger that roughly corresponds to what others would call a 'concept'. This term is used to differentiate a concept pertaining to Being as supposed to just beings.

⁴ Particularly SZ 31, 'Being-there as understanding' and SZ 32, 'Understanding and interpretation'.

⁵SZ 1.

beings encountered within-the-world, and thus that his analysis of understanding only applies to such worldly beings and their Being (presence-at-hand, ready-to-hand, Being-with-others). However, we quickly find in the second division of the book that this is not the case, as we will find that there are numerous references to components of understanding applied to phenomena and *existentiales* different in kind from the beings mentioned above—i.e., the whole of *Dasein*, death, temporality, or even the investigation into *Dasein*'s Being itself, etc. Thus, if the analysis of understanding does indeed apply to these, then having it on the table will allow us both to answer whether time has been understood with what has already been written in the book, and if not, to determine what would be necessary for a further disclosure.

So then, what does understanding a being and its Being entail? To start, in section 31 Heidegger gives a lengthy discussion of the *existential* of *possibility*. Consider the following passages: “*Dasein* is in every case what it can be, and in the way in which it is its possibility,” or, “... possibility as an *existential* is the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which *Dasein* can be characterized ontologically.”⁶ Clearly, Heidegger sees a connection between possibility and understanding. If the latter quote is to be taken seriously, possibility is in fact the more primordial⁷ of the two, and thus understanding itself should be understood or sighted from the horizon of possibility. He himself further says, “Why does the understanding... always press forward into possibilities? It is because the understanding has in itself the existential structure which we call ‘*projection*’.”⁸ Projection is where we understand something by determining what possibilities it holds for us amongst the possibilities we already understand. There is a particular emphasis on the type of understanding that allows us to actually be capable of doing or using something, like knowing how to hammer in a nail, as opposed to an abstract, theoretical cognition, like knowing the physics behind using a hammer.

As an example, imagine a compass seen by the first colonists from Europe and the indigenous peoples of America. For a colonist, while the compass is primarily an instrument for determining direction, it nonetheless also has other significations, such as a trinket of value, a family heirloom, a sign of authority, etc. All of these are possibilities drawn from the past of that individual *Dasein*; it is a projecting-upon the object in front of themselves (the individual *Dasein*) the possibilities that have been given to them from their life experiences thus far. Taking an indigenous person who comes across a compass for the first time, they also may be said to understand the object in front of them, but their understanding is different from that of the colonist. Because the indigenous person must project from their past, the compass is not something that tells direction, for this is not an interpretation that will be initially available, and thus able to be projected. Far more likely are interpretations such as “child’s play

⁶Emphasis added, SZ 143.

⁷‘Primordial’ can be thought of as that which is closer to the ‘truth’, or which has explanatory priority.

⁸SZ 145.

thing,” “valuable object,” “worship artifact,” etc. The way that this object can be taken in hand and used and mastered is dependent upon what one brings along with them as possibilities to project upon it. Thus, an act of understanding is a thrown projection of *Dasein*’s Being upon a being and its possibilities. “As understanding, *Dasein* projects its Being upon possibilities.”⁹

The last structure we need to raise from Heidegger’s discussion of understanding is the *existentiale* of *Interpretation*, which is grounded upon understanding. As stated previously, understanding is the projection of the Being of us, *Dasein*, upon the entity in front of us, freeing it into the possibilities with which our Being is concerned. However, if we are speaking of understanding in general, then we are similarly speaking of all the possibilities in general that we could project upon the entity in front of us. For instance, take a hammer. One possibility is to see it as a thing to hammer with; another is a nuisance that has been left in the wrong place; another is a possible weapon in case of home invasion. In possessing a hammer, even if I do not mentally represent or theoretically conceive of these possibilities, I understand these as possibilities of the hammer in that if the situations arose, I would take it in hand in that manner and use it. Understanding is general, does not imply articulability, and is more oriented around mastery and action than thought and representation. Interpretation, on the other hand, is particular and involves prior conception and moves towards expressibility. It does so in the following way.

The core of interpretation is the sighting of an entity as something. “. . . that which is explicitly understood has the structure of something as something.”¹⁰ Notice Heidegger’s claim that when something is *explicitly* understood, we have moved into interpretation. “In the mere encountering of something it is understood in the totality of its involvements;”¹¹ in interpretation, we move from just seeing an object as absorbed in all of its involvements towards assigning it to a particular one. In the language of possibility, interpretation is the projection of a particular and articulable possibility upon a being before any particular *Dasein* from amongst the totality of possibilities that the *Dasein* projects. For example, in using the hammer as an instrument to hit nails, I exclude other possibilities I could project upon it, such as being a toy, an art piece, a weapon, etc.

While the *as* structure, or something as something else, gives a hint as to what interpretation is, Heidegger gives a more rigorous analysis in the tripartite structure that is *fore-having*, *fore-sight*, and *fore-conception*.¹² Fore-having is the entire wealth of understanding and interpretation that we already have available to us. In coming across an entity to interpret, whatever possibilities we may project upon it are selected from our fore-having. In the previous example of indigenous peoples and colonists, what each side has available in their fore-having to project upon the being, which we would describe as a

⁹SZ 148.

¹⁰SZ 149.

¹¹SZ 149.

¹²SZ 150.

‘compass’, is different.

Fore-sight is where we look only at certain parts of our fore-having and the entity in front of us from the perspective we are currently in. If, for example, I am thirsty and a glass is before me, from my perspective I am looking for something which will aid in slaking my thirst. Thus, the possibilities in my fore-having that serve said purpose will come to the fore over others—e.g., using the glass as a paper weight or a door stop. “This fore-sight ‘takes the first cut’ out of what has been taking into our fore-having, and it does with a view to a definite way in which this can be interpreted.”¹³

In fore-conception we assign a definite possibility from our fore-having that satisfies or accords with the perspective from our fore-seeing. The interpretation in question becomes one that we can conceive or picture prior to the actual action, and thus similarly express and share in language. “...the interpretation has already decided for a definite way of conceiving [the being to be understood] is ground in *something we grasp in advance*—in a *fore-conception*.”¹⁴ To share an understanding of a being is an onerous task given the wide-ranging nature of understanding; even Heidegger describes *Being and Time* in its entirety as a particular interpretation of what *Dasein* is. Such, or any act of interpretation however, is a much easier task to accomplish, granted that the interlocutor you wish to discourse with has the same possibilities available in their fore-having; for example, to instruct said interlocutor to grasp the hammer as the thing to hammer nails in with, they must already have available in their fore-having what the action of hammering looks like, and if they do not, then we must first labour to bring such an understanding into their fore-having.

Thus, to take all the pieces together as a whole, an interpretation is an assignment of a being to be understood *as* something, where the possibility projected is drawn from our fore-having from the point of view of our fore-sight and that we fore-conceive, or can imagine and articulate prior to our action. In the next section, we shall see how Heidegger’s use of the tripartite interpretation structure will both show the role of understanding in the search for time and demonstrate that time is not as yet properly understood.

3 TIME AND TEMPORALITY

With the foregoing analyses, we may now ask the deciding question: Has time or temporality been disclosed or brought into our understanding to the level of depth and rigour promised by Heidegger’s own signposting throughout the book and in accordance with what the relevant prior *existenciales* outline for any sort of grasp of something, viz. understanding, interpretation, phenomenology, ontology? I believe that the answer to this question is clearly no and that we can infer as much from the second division of the book with the

¹³SZ 150.

¹⁴SZ 150.

previous analyses I've brought forth in hand.

Heidegger makes it fairly clear that the fore-structure of interpretation, and hence also the entirety of the analysis of understanding, applies to our grasp of time or temporality. Take the beginning of division two, where we are explicitly told that we are now going to be concerned with moving towards temporality: "Ontological investigation is a possible kind of interpreting... Every interpretation has its fore-having, its fore-sight, and its fore-conception."¹⁵ The entirety of the ontological-existential investigation being carried out in the book is hence assigned to being one amongst innumerable means of interpretation; therefore, we will have to grapple with everything that interpretation implies. In trying to bring time into articulability in our fore-conception, we need the appropriate phenomena to be already available to us in our fore-having, and we need the required perspective in our fore-sight. "What is the status of the fore-sight by which our ontological procedure has hitherto been guided?... And how about what we have had in advance in our hermeneutical Situation hitherto? How about its fore-having?"¹⁶ Thus, we have clear criteria for what an analysis or interpretation of temporality will entail.

So, we may next begin utilizing interpretation as guidance. The first half of the second division is dedicated to the question of *Dasein's* Being-a-whole, which, once brought into our fore-having, is intended to give us our first glimpse or fore-sight of temporality.¹⁷ Does the analysis continue after the first half of the second division, once *Dasein's* Being-a-whole has been existentially analyzed and guaranteed as *existentielly*¹⁸ possible? Afterwards, Heidegger sets out to disentangle time from how temporality shows itself through more proximal phenomena, such as average everydayness and within-timeness.¹⁹ Thus, at this point, we are concerned with how time shows itself through the already disclosed and available phenomena listed above, including temporality. If this is appropriate to the kind of Being that time possesses, then we have no need to inquire any further and have investigated this phenomenon as far as we need and can investigate it.

However, from what I have argued thus far, temporality and the other discussed phenomena do not exhaust the discussion of time and do not seem to be the appropriate kind of Being for time. "Time must be brought to light—and genuinely conceived—as the horizon for all understanding of Being, for any way of interpreting it. In order for us to discern this, *time* needs to be *explicated as the horizon for the understanding of Being, and in terms of temporality as the Being of Dasein, which understand Being.*"²⁰ The role that time is to

¹⁵SZ 231-2.

¹⁶SZ 232-3.

¹⁷I take 'temporality' to be his term for how time appears in our average experiences. 'Time' I reserve for time that has been explained from the most primordial horizon that *Dasein* can muster, which I argue necessitates possibility being understood.

¹⁸'Existentiell' here means that an interpretation has been where we can see Being-a-whole (Being-a-whole as Being-towards-death), as opposed to a general and abstract *existential* analysis.

¹⁹SZ IV, V Division 2.

²⁰SZ 17.

play in the investigation into the meaning of Being is not supposed to be that of a fugitive fore-conception that we only haphazardly fore-see through everyday or average phenomena that are easily available in our fore-having. Rather, in my interpretation in which I have explicated all the aforementioned Heideggerian *existentiales*, time is supposed to be that which we have in our fore-having and from which we can fore-see and thus articulate or fore-conceive any and all of the *existentiales* and phenomena related to the Being of *Dasein* or beyond.

To complete our question as to where the status of the investigation completed thus far has arrived, we can examine the very last section, 83, “The existential-temporal analytic of *Dasein*, and the question of fundamental ontology as to the meaning of Being in general.” The question raised at the beginning of the book is about the meaning of Being in general, and we took *Dasein* as our clue, as a distinctive being amongst beings, to be that which we investigate. Thus far, Heidegger has investigated *Dasein* into its Being. So, where is it that he has actually ended up? “Temporality has manifested itself... as the meaning of the Being of care.”²¹ Indeed, temporality has been disclosed to us insofar as it can be sighted and conceived through the *existentiales* pertaining to *Dasein*’s Being-in-the-world and in how temporality is itself the ground of the possibility of *Dasein*’s having-a-world. “Nevertheless, our way of exhibiting the constitution of *Dasein*’s Being remains only one way which we may take. Our aim is to work out the question of Being in general.”²² As stated by Heidegger himself, the original aim of working out the question of Being in general is yet unsatisfied, and the explicit aim of the entirety of the investigation completed has been to put us on a better footing from which to try to *interpret* the question again. Using the analysis of the interpretation structure, it is with the existential-temporal analytic of *Dasein* available to us in our fore-having that we wish to fore-see our first glimpse of how to reformulate the question as to the meaning of Being in general and thus conceive it and bring it into articulability. “And can we even *seek* the answer as long as the *question* of the meaning of Being remains unformulated?”²³ The following quotes will finish off this section.

“One must seek a way of casting light on the fundamental question of ontology, and this is the way one must go.”²⁴ This is to say that we are still preoccupied with the question of what to have in our fore-having and how to fore-see in that fore-having that which we seek. “The conflict as to the Interpretation of Being cannot be allayed, *because it has not yet been enkindled*. . . . Towards this alone the forgoing investigation is *on the way*.”²⁵ Using the analysis of understanding given previously, we may now state clearly how far along the way we have come, which is that we have a mediate understanding of Being insofar

²¹SZ 436.

²²SZ 436.

²³SZ 437.

²⁴SZ 437.

²⁵SZ 437.

as we only know how Being announces itself through everyday, proximal phenomena of *Dasein*'s unique Being. "How is this disclosive understanding of Being at all possible for *Dasein*?... Hence the ecstatic²⁶ projection of Being must be made possible by some primordial way in which ecstatical temporality temporalizes... Does time itself manifest as the horizon of Being?"²⁷ It is precisely these questions as to where to carry the investigation next that I attempt to shed some light upon via the phenomena and clue available in our fore-having to wrestle with being the *existentiale* of possibility.

4 POSSIBILITY AS PHENOMENA WITHIN WHICH WE MAY CARRY FORTH FURTHER THE INTERPRETATION OF THE MEANING OF BEING

At this point I have shown, either explicitly from Heidegger's own word or as an inference from the analyses he has provided, that the analysis initially sought and promised was in fact not completed. It is clear that Heidegger believed time to be the direction in we need to move, but what more is there to disclose about time? In my view, the phenomenon and *existentiale* of possibility provides us the means for moving forward in such a way.

Let us return to one of our titular quotes, "...possibility as an *existentiale* is the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which *Dasein* can be characterized ontologically." We are here concerned firstly with the question of primordiality, or what is the horizon from which we can see *Dasein*'s Being, and then with Being in general. Thus far we have one of many possible interpretations of the Being of *Dasein*, but not an interpretation where we fore-see and fore-conceive the Being of *Dasein* with possibility as that from which we project in our fore-having. Moreover, if possibility is more fundamental than the fore-going interpretation, then we should be able to re-interpret the analysis done so far in terms of possibility. However, what shall we take as our point of departure, or to which phenomena should we appeal to try to bring possibility into our sight in this fashion? As stated in the last section, there is more than one way to carry out an interpretation and no one correct way over and above others. Thus, I will suggest a couple of phenomena from which we could try to wrest our interpretation, starting with Heidegger's analysis of death.

The phenomenon of death is originally adduced as a means to bring the wholeness of *Dasein* into our understanding, which is a step prior to being able to see temporality as being constitutive of that wholeness. As desired, death is shown to have numerous significations that are constitutive for any *Dasein*, namely, death being non-relational, certain, indefinite, and not to be outstripped.²⁸ These are a couple of the ultimate characteristics of death that

²⁶The term 'ecstases' will be explained shortly.

²⁷SZ 437.

²⁸SZ 258-9.

Heidegger brings into the discussion. However, as important as they are, I argue that these are only preparatory ways of explaining the value that death plays. It is rather *possibility* that is the more fundamental characterization. “In the first instance, we must characterize Being-towards-death as a *Being-towards-a-possibility*—indeed, towards a distinctive possibility of *Dasein* itself.”²⁹ Indeed, even all the qualifiers that we just previously mentioned are not predicated on ‘death’ itself as some free-floating phenomenon, but death as a distinctive possibility, a possibility that has those qualities. “On the other hand, if Being-towards-death has to disclose understandingly the possibility which we have characterized, and if it is to disclose it *as a possibility*, then in such Being-towards-death this possibility must not be weakened: it must be understood *as a possibility*, it must be cultivated *as a possibility*, and we must *put up* with it *as a possibility*, in the way we comport ourselves to it.”³⁰ Death is both to be understood and interpreted as a possibility; we are to *be* towards it as if it is a possibility, and keeping it as possibility is the highest injunction Heidegger gives to it. Further, while Heidegger has discussed Being-towards-death as a phenomenon and how we can choose to authentically or inauthentically comport ourselves to it, the structure of how to comport ourselves to any possibility whatsoever is absent.

So, let us try re-interpreting another *existentiale*. Suppose in this phenomenal horizon, that we make our departure from the *ecstases* of temporality. “The future, the character of having been, and the Present, show the phenomenal characteristics of the ‘towards-oneself’, the ‘back-to’, and the ‘letting-oneself-be-encountered-by’ Temporality is the primordial ‘outside-of-itself’ in and for itself.”³¹ “The question is . . . about how ‘coming-towards-oneself’ is, as such, to be primordially defined.”³² The term ‘ecstasis’ comes from the etymology of *ek-*, meaning ‘outside’ or ‘beyond’ and *-stasis*, meaning ‘to stand’ or ‘to remain in place’. The connotation of the word was that of a mystical or holy trance, an ‘out-of-body experience’ or an absorption in the divine outside of oneself. So here too does Heidegger play with this connotation in using the word *ecstasis* to refer to *Dasein*’s absorption with that which is beyond or outside of itself: A rock never gets outside of itself. A change of location, a scratch on it, being picked up and carried along by an animal or person—the rock itself is not concerned with any of these occurrences.

Debatable would be the further assertion that living entities such as trees and animals are not open ecstatically in the manner that *Dasein* is either. A tree is at least responsive to stimuli in a way that a rock is not; watering it will aid it in growing and brightening its foliage; it will try to grow its leaves wherever the sunlight is coming from. However, this is not yet an ‘out-of-body’, other-concerned phenomenon. A tree does not discriminate or “see” the entities that affect it; there is no sighting or interpreting of the sunlight that nourishes it but

²⁹SZ 261.

³⁰SZ 261.

³¹SZ 328-9.

³²SZ 330.

rather a mechanistic response to the sun's rays, the same as if we dropped a rock and allowed it to be carried by gravity. Thus, living beings such as trees are not open ecstatically.

More debatable still would be if this applied to animals as well; I think that animals are indeed more than just passive recipients that respond to external stimuli. Nonetheless, Heidegger would state that it is *Dasein* that is uniquely ecstatic; *qua* human being, we are indeed affected by psychological, chemical, biological, and physical laws and thus are mechanistically determined like the previously mentioned entities, but *qua Dasein*, as the entity for whom the possibilities disclosed in that situation matter, we are something distinct. More than just being passive recipients, we can lose ourselves in our absorption with what would affect us or what we will affect; we can be *enthralled* by *possibilities*.

Here it remains an open question whether through *existentia*—in these explanations of it as actuality that at first seem quite different—the being of a stone or even life as the being of plants and animals is adequately thought. In any case living creatures are as they are without standing outside their being as such and within the truth of being, preserving in such standing the essential nature of their being. Of all the beings that are, presumably the most difficult to think about are living creatures, because on the one hand they are in a certain way most closely akin to us, and on the other they are at the same time separated from our ek-sistent essence by an abyss.³³

Thus, to sum up ecstasis, a way of stating it is that, in our concern for the future, the possibilities in said future are significant for us and we see them from the possibilities that lie behind us in the current factual situation, or the moment of vision.³⁴ “The ecstatic character of the primordial future lies precisely in the fact that the future closes one’s potentiality-for-being...”³⁵ The future is the privileged tense insofar as we are considering ecstasis and existence.

However, now that we have characterized ecstatic openness and its bias for the future, we may yet again re-interpret this phenomenon in terms of *possibility*; *Dasein*’s Being-ecstatically-open is a way of saying that it is the being that *liberates* the world around it to *come* into Being. *Dasein* is primarily Being-possible, and in its Being-such it *frees* other entities to come into Being, by understanding them in terms of possibility.³⁶ *Qua* human being who receives a stimulus via light in our eyes that is sent to the brain, we are not discussing ourselves at the level of existence; being mechanistically affected in such a manner is no different from a rock kicked down the road or a plant’s

³³Heidegger, *Letter on “Humanism”* (LH) 248.

³⁴SZ 328.

³⁵SZ 330.

³⁶SZ 83.

leaves seeking light. In understanding and interpreting the sun's light as giver of sight, food, harm, or whatever our preoccupation is with how it will partake in those roles in our future endeavours, we become immersed or enthralled with what is outside and ahead of us. In having what is outside of us matter, we begin to *exist* for the first time, or rather, it is by being ecstatically open that *Dasein* is in its very Being existential. "The 'being' of the *Da*, and only it, has the fundamental character of ek-sistence, that is, of an ecstatic inherence in the truth of being. The ecstatic essence of the human being consists in ek-sistence. . . ." ³⁷

As further strength that Being-open ecstatically is equivalent to saying that *Dasein* is the being that is enthralled by *possibility*, we may consider the following from *Letter on "Humanism"*:

Thought in a more original way such favoring means the bestowal of their essence as a gift. Such favoring [*Mögen*] is the proper essence of enabling [*Vermögen*], which not only can achieve this or that but also can let something essentially unfold in its provenance, that is, let it be. It is on the "strength" of such enabling by favoring that something is properly able to be. This enabling is what is properly "possible" [*das "Mögliche"*], whose essence resides in favoring. From this favoring Being enables thinking. The former makes the latter possible. Being is the enabling-favoring, the "may be" [*das Mög-liche*]. ³⁸

Here we have perhaps the clearest endorsements of possibility and its role in our investigation of *Dasein*, particularly ecstasis. We may take the "favouring" and "enabling" of *Dasein* as being equivalent to the ecstatic Being-entranced-by. This desiring "enables" that which we desire to come into Being, or to Be-possible. From the etymology of the words (in German), the entirety of the process of moving from favouring or desiring to Being-possible is tied together. To be open to the world around us in terms of existing is to say that we let that which we desire come into possibility. As a further note, Heidegger states that this allowing that which we favour to be possible is the basis for allowing there to be thought; thus, *prior* to whatever role we give to thought—the way we express ourselves and conceptualization—is our engagement in favouring and enabling and bringing into possibility.

Thus, I have arrived at the place I initially sought out, which is that of continuing with the notion of possibility Heidegger's efforts in *Being and Time*. Possibility gives us a more primordial vantage point from which to envisage Being, and it brings together the previously disparate analysis into a genuine whole.

³⁷LH 248.

³⁸LH 241. 'Möglich' and 'Möglichkeit' are the German words for 'possible' and 'possibility', respectively, while 'Mögen' is the verb 'to want' or 'what one would like' and 'Vermögen' is 'to be capable of doing something'.

CONCLUSION

My closing remarks shall be some quotes from Heidegger where he explicitly states that *Being and Time* is only preliminary, in accordance with the inferences and implications I have worked with above. “In *Being and Time* no statement about the relation of *essentia* and *existentia* can yet be expressed, since there it is still a question of preparing something precursory.”³⁹ “It is everywhere supposed that the attempt in *Being and Time* ended in a blind alley. Let us not comment any further upon that opinion. The thinking that hazards a few steps in *Being and Time* [74] has even today not advanced beyond that publication.”⁴⁰ *Being and Time* represents, and is, an incredible first foray into the issues of ontology, existence, and Being, using these terms as he defined them in said work.

However, a first foray is all that it is. In both the works “A Question Concerning Technology” and *Letter on “Humanism”*, we see that Heidegger must almost start from the beginning as in *Being and Time*, working in a different manner through the topic of the paper until he arrives at the appropriate phenomenal viewpoint with which to answer the questions originally raised. I have detailed a bit of this working through in *Letter on “Humanism”*, but if *Being and Time* is a rough work and only goes steps along the way, these latter attempts are only fragments and whispers on an unsteady footing. Nonetheless, we can glean enough from them, in conjunction with *Being and Time* itself, to determine what the next step is on how to further the investigation into fundamental ontology that Heidegger initially sought, and I have hopefully shown at this point that possibility is a part of that step. The carrying forth of this task, however, will have to wait at least a little longer.

REFERENCES

Heidegger, M., *Being and Time*. Translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Blackwell, 1962.

———, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Translated by W. Lovitt, Garland, 1977.

———, “Letter on “Humanism”.” In W. McNeil (Editor), *Pathmarks*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 239–276.

Sheehan, T., “The Turn.” In B. W. Davis (Editor), *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts*, Acumen, 2010, pp. 82–101.

³⁹LH 250-1.

⁴⁰LH 261. From this quote, one may reasonably infer that Heidegger’s tone is somewhat dismissive of the opinion that *Being and Time* ended in a “blind alley,” viz., that the book came to an end in such a fashion that no one is certain what has actually been accomplished nor how to carry it further. Rather, the “thinking that hazards a few steps,” i.e., something that is precursory has not advanced any further since its publication, implying that it already could have been.

NOĒSIS XVIII

LAW, PHILOSOPHY, AND DISCRIMINATION

IN CONVERSATION WITH SOPHIA MOREAU

7 March 2017

Sophia Reibetanz Moreau is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Associate Professor of Law at the University of Toronto. She is also an Associate Editor of the journal *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, and a former law clerk to Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin of the Supreme Court of Canada. She is currently working on a book that defends a new theory of discrimination and why it is wrong. She has published articles in philosophy and law journals on discrimination, on topics within moral philosophy (e.g., contractualism and aggregation, agency, and character), and on current issues in law. Her work on discrimination has been cited by the Supreme Court of Canada in influential cases on equality rights. Professor Moreau teaches undergraduate and graduate courses both in the Law Faculty and in the Philosophy Department. She frequently teaches PHL271, “Law and Morality,” a large undergraduate course at the Philosophy Department. In this wide-ranging interview with Noēsis editors Amit Singh, Ashley Fiazool, and Joe Yule, Professor Moreau discusses her education and early interests in academia, her research in discrimination theory, and topics at the nexus of law and philosophy more broadly.

Noēsis: Thanks for doing this interview. We’d like to begin by asking when you developed an interest in philosophy and what led to that interest?

SM: I think I’ve always been interested in philosophy. I remember as a child asking a lot of philosophical questions, even though I didn’t know that that’s what I was doing. I used to play a game where I would stand in front of the mirror and asked repeatedly, “Who am I? Who am I?” As a child, if you do this for long enough, you actually reach a point where you feel as though you are nothing more than the question asking itself, and I remember being fascinated by this. (I’ve tried it only once since then and it didn’t work, so I suppose that I must have lost the childlike wonder necessary for this particular experiment!).

As an undergraduate here at U of T, I studied philosophy along with English and French literature, which I loved. I think at a certain point I realized that I was most interested in literature because of the philosophical questions it poses, so I moved into philosophy for my graduate work. But I still have a love of literature and I greatly admire philosophers such as Martha Nussbaum, who integrate literary analysis into their philosophical arguments in a way that deepens the problems they are discussing.

Noësis: How did you end up going into law, and what prompted your decision to go to law school?

SM: I decided to go to law school towards the end of my graduate studies in philosophy, partly because I felt I needed knowledge of the law and of legal reasoning in order to be a better moral, political, and legal philosopher. Of course, it's easy to see how a knowledge of the law would enrich one's work as a legal philosopher: If you're asking questions about what makes a particular rule into a rule of law, or about the nature of legal interpretation, or about the appropriate reach of the law, it helps to know what some of our laws actually say! You can probably also understand how a knowledge of the law might enrich a person's work in political philosophy. When we ask questions about distributive justice, for instance, or about responsibility and punishment, it's useful to know how particular legal systems have understood these ideas. To say this isn't to assume that our legal systems always give the best answers to these questions; but the answers they do give can tell us about what people value, and about how we have collectively understood these questions.

It may seem less obvious that a knowledge of the law could help us as moral philosophers, but in fact, that was my main interest at the time I decided to go to law school. I was at Harvard pursuing my Ph.D., and there were a number of wonderful seminars in normative ethics in which we tried to think through the moral principles that might govern what we owe to other people. This was very exciting. But I couldn't help thinking that our society had already been doing this for generations through its own law-making and that we might learn something from these laws if we looked at them as a kind of repository of thought about what we owe to each other.

Noësis: Your research works at the intersection of philosophy and law. In what ways has your legal training influenced your philosophical reasoning and vice versa?

SM: That's a great question. Let me start by saying that only some of my work is at the intersection of philosophy and law—namely, the work on equality and discrimination. I also work in moral philosophy on issues that have nothing to do with law. For instance, I'm pursuing some questions about autonomy and obligation: I think that many of us find ourselves under certain cultural or gender-based obligations, obligations that we experience partly as constraints but partly as definitive of who we are, and I'm trying to explore what this should mean for our understanding of autonomy. I have another project on moments of wonder and transcendence in our moral reasoning. We all have such moments, and they give great meaning to our lives. But they

are conspicuously absent from most discussions of our moral and practical reasoning and of normative ethics—which sometimes seem to me to make ethics look a bit like filling out a rather dull multiple choice test. Should you turn the trolley towards the one or towards the many? Should you keep your promise to your friend or go to the movies? Certainly some of our moral reasoning is like this. But moments of wonder are not outcomes we try to promote or moral facts that give us immediate reasons to do *x* or *y*. Sometimes, in a very inchoate way, they change the way we see the world, shaping the options we take to be available to us; sometimes they offer us hope—but what is it exactly that they do to us, or that we should do with them? I’m trying to think through this. These projects don’t involve the law. Conversely, I’ve also done some purely legal work that doesn’t involve philosophy: Case comments for law journals on recent Supreme Court of Canada cases, for instance, or volunteer work for L.E.A.F., the Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund.

But interestingly, even when I do the purely legal work or the purely philosophical work, I’m aware of the kinds of questions that each discipline would ask and the modes of reasoning they use, and that has proven very important to me. All of my “purely” legal work always approaches legal issues with a philosopher’s desire to ask philosophical questions about them and pursue them through arguments and counter-arguments. And my purely philosophical work in moral philosophy is highly influenced by my legal training. Let me give you two examples.

First, when I do work in normative ethics now, it’s very much shaped by my knowledge of tort law. Tort law is the area of law that governs our interpersonal obligations, or what we owe to other people as a matter of our private interactions. It covers things like personal negligence and intentional wrongs such as battery and assault, and most of it has been developed through what we call ‘the common law’, or judge-made law. Judges don’t simply lay down a result—they articulate in great detail their reasons for adopting particular principles, and they always engage with other the reasons of other judges in the cases that came before them. So their judgments really do read like a remarkable history of our thought about what we owe to each other in a legal context. Knowing this history has influenced my thought about our moral obligations. I’ve come to see through the law, for instance, that negligence is a very important way of failing to live up to our obligations to others—and it’s one that is under-discussed by most moral philosophers, with the exception of a few Kantians such as Barbara Herman and Seana Shiffrin.

Second, law has influenced my philosophical outlook by making me more open to the validity of different perspectives. Lawyers, judges, and legal academics are quite comfortable with the idea that there will always be multiple perspectives on a particular issue, often perspectives that generate conflicting demands. Part of the reason for this is that ours is an adversarial legal system, so there are always at least two different perspectives on every legal case: The perspective of the plaintiff and that of the defendant in private law, or the perspective of the crown and the accused in criminal law. Academic le-

gal criticism recognizes a huge array of theoretical perspectives—critical race approaches, feminist approaches, law and economics, formalism, law and philosophy, and others. Often our own Supreme Court will adopt tests that try to incorporate multiple perspectives. A familiar example is our current test for duty of care in negligence law, which first asks whether a relationship of proximity exists between two parties such that negligence of the one would likely injure the other—this is arguably a philosophical inquiry into the closeness of the parties in a normative sense—and then turns to a different policy inquiry and asks whether there are any pressing interests or goal-based reasons for limiting the duty, and it’s at this stage that economic concerns or critical race concerns or feminist concerns can be raised. So within the law, we try to use these different perspectives to deepen our understanding of an issue.

By contrast, quite a number of philosophers that I know think of their aim as eliminating differences in perspective. For instance, my mentor, Derek Parfit, firmly believed that in an ideal world, he would convert everyone to the truths laid out in *Reasons and Persons* and *On What Matters*. Studying the law has caused me to move away from this view of the philosopher’s task. I believe it’s very important to accept a diversity of perspectives, not as an unfortunate fact stemming from a failure of rationality on some people’s part, but as something that enriches our lives and can actually give us a better understanding of certain moral concepts. And certainly this is reflected in my work on discrimination, where I’m defending a pluralist theory of discrimination and equality rights.

Noësis: Did you have thoughts of being an academic when you were an undergraduate student?

SM: Honestly, no, I don’t think I thought about my future career at all when I was an undergraduate! I just really enjoyed doing philosophy together with my fellow students and my teachers: I was quite immersed in our discussions and our readings and these were, in a very real sense, my life. And you know, I think that’s the best reason for going into philosophy, especially nowadays, when the job market is very tight. Philosophy will never be a lucrative profession, and it will always be hard to land a tenure-track job in it.¹ It’s a mistake to go into philosophy because you want a job. You go into it because you can’t imagine yourself living life in any other way, any way other than through the asking of philosophical questions. I did try, briefly, the life of a lawyer—or at least, the life of a summer student at a large Toronto law firm, which my partner (who is a lawyer) assures me was much more relaxing than the life of an actual lawyer. The law firm was wonderful and the work was challenging. But there was never any time to think about philosophical questions because the clock was ticking and I had to be billing, and I could hardly justify billing our client for two hours of philosophical reflection! That was when I realized that I would really be happiest as an academic.

¹ As an aside: I remember when I applied to graduate schools, one of my application packages included a list entitled “Top Ten Things You Can Do With Your Philosophy Ph.D.” No. 1 on the list was: Drive a taxi.

Noësis: You mentioned Derek Parfit already. We're interested in who your mentors were throughout your education and how they've continued to influence your thinking.

SM: I was lucky enough to start my graduate training by doing a B.Phil at Oxford, working with Joseph Raz, Jerry Cohen, and Derek Parfit. All of them, in their different ways, influenced me tremendously. Joseph has such an attention to detail and a nuanced interpretation of an argument, and he was the person who first taught me how to develop an argument in a meticulous way. I was rather afraid of him while I was there because of his terrifying capacity to tear another person's argument to shreds when that person doesn't even realize they are being shredded. But he stands by his students; a wonderful illustration of this was given to me at my very first conference when a young post-doc tried to make himself look good by tearing apart one of my arguments. Joseph was in the audience, and he stood up at once and said, "Sophia, will you allow me?" and proceeded to do a Harry Potter on this particular Voldemort until nothing was left except teeny tiny scraps of Voldemort floating away in the wind. Jerry Cohen taught me ostensibly about Marx and Hegel—but really we discussed almost everything, including art history, and he continued to teach and mentor me long after I left Oxford.

But probably the person who had the most profound influence on me was Derek Parfit. He was extraordinarily generous with his students, and we would regularly have supervision meetings that would run for three or four hours in his rooms at All Souls. In his eccentric way, he would begin them around midnight and they would just go on and on, until three or four o'clock in the morning. I remember walking home from All Souls College after those meetings, the air heavy with the silence of very early morning, the cobblestones all uneven beneath my feet, and in my head a swirl of questions and excitement. Derek was so immersed in philosophy that often his supervisions didn't end when the meetings ended. One night, two evenings after a supervision in which we had both been left stumped about a particular question, my phone rang. I was fast asleep and I jolted awake, my heart thudding, seeing '3:00am' on my clock and wondering what accident must have befallen a friend or family in order for them to be calling me at this hour. I picked up the phone with a shaking hand. And it was Derek's voice, speaking. He didn't say hello. He didn't say, "Am I waking you up?" He said "About the question on page five..." and he continued to tell me what he had spent the day thinking of in answer to that question. We discussed it, and when he was satisfied, he closed the phone. That was my introduction to the life of a philosopher. Though of course my life now doesn't look very much like that. It has small children in it and activities other than philosophy; and I do not phone anyone up at 2:30am to discuss the questions raised on any pages of their essays!

After Oxford, I went to Harvard, partly because Derek persuaded me that it would be a wonderful place to continue to do moral philosophy. I was lucky enough to work with Tim Scanlon and Chris Korsgaard there. Tim really taught me a lot more about how to craft a philosophical argument and how

to probe deeply into the motivations underlying other people's ways of setting up their arguments. He is also a marvellous human being. Very often I think that academic philosophers think of their moral philosophy as one thing and their personal lives as another, and Tim is one of those rare individuals whose humanity is always shining through into his writing in ways that teach us important things.

Chris Korsgaard was inspirational for me. She was my first female teacher in graduate school, and I admired the fact that as a woman, she had managed to thrive in a profession that is still very much male-dominated. She taught me about the importance of thinking of one's writing as a narrative. Her view is that although as philosophers, we write down our thoughts in the form of arguments and make it look as though we're propelled along by logic, we are really just telling a story. Philosophers are story-tellers, and they need to tell their stories in the richest way possible, in much the same way that a narrator does when she narrates a story. I've always held that with me, and I think that has changed my writing as well. I used to write in a way that I would describe as a philosopher playing a game, and I'm sure you're all familiar with this. There are some articles within moral philosophy which are written in a highly formal style, with lots of variables and acronyms and hypothetical examples, which give one the feeling that their authors are playing a very intricate game and playing it very well because they are very smart. Chris Korsgaard doesn't write like this. She tries to tell a story of human importance. And this is what I try to do now too. I don't think it's enough to play the game smartly. I want to write about things that touch us, and I want to write about them in ways that attend to the full richness and complexity of our lives. That's one reason why I find discrimination such an interesting area to work in.

Noësis: That's a really fascinating characterization of Korsgaard's writing. I've never heard characterized it explicitly in that way before, but now that I think of her work, it all sort of makes sense.

SM: Yes, her arguments do read like stories—especially lectures such as “The Sources of Normativity.”

Noësis: On the subject of your own teaching, you are well known among the Department's undergraduates for teaching a large second year class called “Law and Morality.” That course is remarkable for making philosophizing about moral and legal problems nearly indistinguishable from their real world implications on matters of justice and dispute resolution. In this vein, you have suggested that legal theory should come into contact with legal practice. Can you elaborate on this, perhaps through a specific example?

SM: Sure. So let me say firstly, just to clarify, that I don't think law and morality, or law and legal theory, are indistinguishable. Let's start with the idea that morality, in a narrow sense, is the domain of what we owe to each other—and in a broader sense, it encompasses not only our obligations but all questions about what makes our lives valuable or worthwhile and how we are to relate meaningfully to other people. There are many aspects of this that are not the proper objects of state regulation—for instance, virtues like generosity

and kindness and aspects of our private lives such as our families (although one has to be careful here: Parts of the family are quite legitimately regulated, and many feminists have argued that if we don't regulate apparently private realms, then many of us will be left without freedom within them). And what about the law? Well, I tend to think of the law as the set of institutions that together establish the social conditions under which we can relate to each other as equals, and that enable us publicly to protect our most important values. So that means that the law has a distinctive subject matter. And because it's using its coercive institutions to establish conditions of equality, it raises a whole set of questions about the legitimacy of coercion, the respective roles of legislatures and courts, etc., that are not raised in the moral sphere.

But of course law and morality are related. And some areas of the law are particularly closely related to certain values, so they seem more closely tied to morality than others. I think of discrimination law as one of these areas. When you consider some of the acts that we believe to be morally wrong—killing the innocent, for instance—you can imagine studying them thoroughly from a philosophical standpoint without considering the criminal law or knowing anything about the provisions that concern murder in the Criminal Code. The same isn't true of discrimination. Our sense of what constitutes discrimination has been very deeply shaped by the laws that prohibit discrimination, and those laws in turn have been closely responsive to public sentiments about the kinds of exclusions that are morally problematic and the kinds of traits that, when made the basis of an exclusion or disadvantage, constitute wrongful discrimination. So I can't imagine anyone coming up with an accurate account of what discrimination is or why it's morally wrong without considering the structure of discrimination law.

Noësis: That's really interesting. You said that in some areas of law the distinction is blurred, but in others perhaps there's a clear distinction. I'm thinking now about the very famous broader debate about whether law and morality are indeed distinct things. Would it be fair to say that, in some sense that this question is not answerable in the abstract, considering the law as the whole? And that, rather, we need to look at specific doctrinal areas of law in order to determine if that distinction is as sharp?

SM: When people ask about the relation between law and morality in the way you did now, they're often thinking about a particular set of debates between natural law theorists and legal positivists about whether a legal system (or a law within it) needs to have some minimal moral content in order to fulfill its functions. I wasn't thinking of these debates when I made my earlier remarks. My own view of these debates is that legal positivists and natural law theorists may just be answering two different sets of questions. Legal positivists are trying to come up with a descriptive theory of what a legal system is and what a law within such a system is, a theory that will hold across all different kinds of legal systems, whether they're just or unjust. But natural law theorists and philosophers such as Ronald Dworkin, who think that laws do need to have some minimal moral content, are often motivated by a different

set of questions. They are trying to come up with an account of our laws, and of our legal systems, that could make sense of them as justifiable to us. And how can we make sense of them as justifiable? By showing that there is an interpretation of these laws according to which they realize particular values, values that seem to underpin our democratic society.

Noësis: In the Introduction to *Philosophical Foundations of Discrimination Law*, an anthology you co-edited with Deborah Hellman, you write that the literature surrounding discrimination law has thus far tended to be doctrinal rather than philosophical. We were wondering—and I think this would be helpful for undergraduate students who are interested in law—why is it important for philosophers, in addition to people who regard themselves as legal academics and lawyers, to be engaged with discrimination law and theory?

SM: That's a great question—why should philosophers care about what discrimination law says? For a long time, they didn't. Philosophers were certainly preoccupied with equality. But they thought of equality as a component of distributive justice, rather than in terms of non-discrimination. So the questions they asked were questions like: What is it that we ought to equalize, as between people? Should we equalize welfare, or resources, or opportunity (either opportunity for welfare or opportunity for resources)? Is it really equality that matters, or just priority for the worst off? Then certain philosophers, such as Elizabeth Anderson, pointed out that these debates seemed strangely to neglect most of the reasons why we care about equality in our public political debates. Where, she asked, are all of the discussions of oppression? Where is our awareness of minorities and the ways in which they are turned into second-class citizens? So Anderson, along with Joshua Cohen and Sam Scheffler, developed a view that they called "relational egalitarianism," whose aim was to think of equality through relationships of equal status rather than through equal distributions of certain goods (though of course they saw some of the latter as instrumentally helpful in achieving the former).

This debate seems to have stalled at the moment. Distributive egalitarians claim that relations of equal status are simply constituted by the right sorts of distributions and that they are talking about the same thing as relational egalitarians. But relational egalitarians insist they are talking about something more than this, which cannot be understood simply in terms of distributive justice. Interestingly, none of these philosophers has done an in-depth analysis of discrimination law. If they did, I think they would find it fascinating and helpful, because these difficult questions about how to think of the distributive component of equality in relation to the recognition or status-based component have played themselves out in different ways in discrimination law. Discrimination law seems to me to offer several ways of conceptualizing relations of equal status that don't just reduce these relationships to questions of distribution. Of course, part of the point of discrimination law is to ensure that certain important opportunities in society—jobs, accommodation, goods, and services—are not unfairly denied to certain groups, just because they are alleged to possess certain traits: So it has a distributive aim. But discrimination law also aims at

eliminating oppression and subordination, and its complex doctrines can help us spell out a detailed, substantive account of what oppression and subordination involve. So I think that a knowledge of discrimination law could help many relational egalitarians, and might thereby help move us forward on this particular philosophical debate.

Noësis: You're working on a book laying out a theory of discrimination and of course that will draw on your existing contributions in the area. Are you able to say in broad outlines what the main thrust of the argument is and what, in a nutshell, makes discrimination wrong?

SM: Yes, sure. In my book, I'm trying to defend a pluralist theory of why discrimination is unjust. That is to say, a theory that recognizes that there are a number of different but complementary reasons why particular acts of discrimination are unjust. Every theory of discrimination that has been defended so far by philosophers has been monistic: It appeals to some single value or single feature of discriminatory actions to explain why they are wrong. I am trying to argue that this is a mistake. We shouldn't single out one feature and try to reduce the moral significance of all of the other features of discrimination to that one value or feature—otherwise, we end up simplifying and misunderstanding this complex phenomenon. Instead, I argue that we can look both to the structure of discrimination law and to victims' experiences of discrimination, as presented to us by grassroots activist organizations, to figure out what the many different wrong-making features of discrimination are.

So what are some of these features of discrimination, on my view? One of them is that it perpetuates social subordination. Most existing accounts of subordination take subordination to involve one group having greater power and *de facto* authority over another, and also the one group being shown greater respect or deference. But my account adds a focus on what I call "tacit structural accommodations"—that is, features of our social practices, our expectations, our built environment, that tacitly construct the needs and interests of one group as normal and accommodate them, while ignoring the needs and interests of other groups. The difficulties faced by persons with physical disabilities give us a very clear example of this. If you think of the way in which houses are typically built, they have many steps, and they have light switches and countertops at a height that is too high for people in wheelchairs to reach. All of this tacitly accommodates the "normal" person who walks, and it also helps to portray him as normal and his needs as somehow natural. The same is true with respect to washrooms that are labelled male and female: They tacitly accommodate people who fit neatly into one gender or another, and they help maintain the expectation that this is just how people naturally are and should be. I'm trying to argue in my book that if we think of subordination only as a matter of abstract differences in power, or as a matter of overt displays of respect toward the privileged group and displays of disdain for the underprivileged group, we will miss all of these very real structural features of our world that need to be changed before we can eliminate subordination.

So that's the subordination component. I think that another reason why

discrimination is wrong is that it denies certain people the freedom to make choices about their lives without having to face obstacles created by other people's assumptions about their race or their gender, and this is the freedom that I've written about extensively in my past articles. I call it "deliberative freedom." It doesn't map neatly onto either negative or positive freedom: It is somewhat similar to negative freedom in that it involves an absence of certain kinds of interferences (but not all of them), and it is somewhat similar to positive freedom in that the reason why we care about it is that we care about being able to make our own choices in our own way.

My work on deliberative freedom has been discussed by a number of philosophers, in particular Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen in his book, *Born Free and Equal*. His book is wonderful, but I feel he misconstrues the role of deliberative freedom in my account. He is a consequentialist, and he thinks that deliberative freedom matters because it's one good amongst others, and whenever some of it is taken away from you, you are harmed. If that were the case, this would be a rather odd construal of discrimination law, because of course discrimination law doesn't protect everyone from every intrusion on their deliberative freedom; there are lots of people who have their deliberative freedoms restricted in a way that we think is perfectly fine. In the book, I'm trying to explain that this isn't the right way to think of deliberative freedom. In certain cases we have a right to deliberative freedom because we have a right to be treated as an equal, and part of what is involved in giving you an equal status is not allowing other people to throw certain obstacles in your path.

Then lastly in the book, I talk about the very obvious fact that if you look at most anti-discrimination laws around the world, they protect against something we call systemic discrimination. They aim to redistribute certain goods and opportunities to groups that are especially badly off in society. Some philosophers have tried to argue that discrimination law can be wholly understood in terms of this function. I try to show in the book that such accounts can't capture obvious features of the law or the full complexity of victims' complaints about discrimination, which are often complaints about subordination or about denials of deliberative freedom.

Noësis: Your work is in many ways pioneering given that philosophical consideration of discrimination is relatively new. You wrote in *Philosophical Foundations of Discrimination Law* that "there is no initial agreement among scholars as to what the important questions are" in this growing field. Are you able to say more about what the challenges and opportunities of working in a budding, new field of inquiry are?

SM: One of the things that's most exciting is that, because the field is so young, no one has a vested interest in continuing to defend a view that they have been rehearsing for twenty or thirty years. And no one feels the need to attack others in order to shore up their own longstanding view. So the field is very collaborative: People are genuinely eager to work together and to respect and build upon each other's views. I'm quite close to a number of philosophers

writing in this field, and I have to say that one of my greatest intellectual joys is meeting up with them in various cities (wherever we happen to be, for conferences or workshops or just as visitors) and talking for an afternoon and trying to make progress in our thoughts together. I feel very privileged to be a part of this group of scholars.

To be honest with you, that is one of the best things about being a philosopher. At its best, philosophy involves deep collaboration with other people, and it is really thrilling to be a part of this.

I've talked about the wonderful side of working in a new area. There are difficulties too, though. Persuading philosophers that the law can actually help us think about equality is tougher than you might think! Many philosophers think of the law just as a co-incidental result of power struggles between different private interest groups, each vying for public recognition. And as a result, they don't think that the law necessarily has anything valuable to tell us about why particular acts are unjust. They would say, for instance, that tort law is just an assembly of rules and that these rules reflect privileged groups thinking about their own interests. Similarly, they see discrimination law as nothing more than the result of different grassroots organizations—feminist groups, racial minorities, religious minorities, a few groups of people with disabilities—lobbying for various self-interested protections. And what happens actually to be protected—what ends up in the law itself—just reflects what was politically successful in the moment.

This isn't, for reasons I've tried to explain, my own view. I'm very lucky to be here at the University of Toronto, where many of my colleagues in legal theory share the view that the law can be seen as a coherent attempt to answer certain moral problems. The U of T legal theorists don't deny the obvious fact that as a matter of history, law comes into existence through political processes involving different interest groups. But they believe that these groups are still collectively striving for something that we can recognize as justice. And colleagues of mine such as Ernest Weinrib and Arthur Ripstein have argued forcefully and movingly that we can see particular areas of law as coherent expressions of particular ideals of justice.

Noësis: In this growing field of the community of scholars who are writing with discrimination law—are they largely people like yourself, who are both law professors and philosophers, or are they just philosophers? What is the distribution like?

SM: Most of the people writing in this area are both law professors and philosophers. There are a few writing who are just philosophers, but they are in the minority.

Noësis: You've said that something that's exciting about working in a relatively new field is that there are fewer fixed ideas to work around. In regards to fields where the literature is more developed, do you think that there are paradigms that limit work in those fields?

SM: That's a fabulous question. Of course there will always be people who manage to break out of established debates and fixed understandings of

the important questions in a particular area. But I think you're right that it can be much more difficult to do this in an area of philosophy where a certain distinction has established such a hold that people assume it exhausts the available ways of thinking about a problem.

One example of this is the vice-like grip on our ideas of freedom that is still enjoyed by Berlin's famous article, "Two Concepts of Liberty," from 1958. As most of you know, Berlin thought of negative freedom roughly as the absence of external (human) impediments to our actions, whereas positive freedom was the ability of an individual to govern him or herself, to live her life in her own way. He suggested that these have, historically, been the two dominant ways of conceiving of freedom. Berlin's taxonomy is a kind of orthodoxy, not just in many philosophical circles but also in many legal circles (especially in international human rights law). Every time one mentions "freedom," one can hear other people asking, "Do you mean positive freedom, or negative freedom?"

Of course, we are philosophers, specialists in challenging distinctions, and so quite a number of philosophers have pointed out that this isn't an exhaustive list of options. Philip Pettit has argued that the kind of freedom we really do and should care about is not mastery of ourselves, but freedom from mastery by others, or as he puts it, "non-domination." Various groups participating in debates about identity politics have argued that underprivileged and stigmatized minorities can't be free in a meaningful sense until they have a variety of other obstacles removed from their paths—obstacles that aren't happily described either as human obstacles to negative freedom or as internal obstacles to positive freedom. But Berlin's apparent "dichotomy" still seems to shape the terrain, and one always feels under an obligation to define one's own view of freedom in relation to negative and positive freedom—as I did above when I described the relevant chapter of my book!

Noësis: One of your papers is called "Discrimination as Negligence" and was published in the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*. Could you speak about the relationship you see between negligence and discrimination? Have your views changed since you published that paper in 2010?

SM: I argued in that paper that many forms of discrimination involve a kind of negligence, and I still hold this view. But I don't think that saying this implies that discriminatory acts are somehow less serious than intentional wrongs. Negligence can be just as morally problematic as deliberate wrongdoing.

It's interesting to see how society's views on this have changed, particularly with respect to discrimination. In the 1960's, when discrimination laws were first developed, discrimination was thought of as a deliberate or intentional wrong: The paradigmatic cases of it were treated as the Jim Crow laws in the United States, which deliberately enforced racial segregation in public facilities and treated African-Americans as second class citizens. The aim of discrimination law was to ferret out these instances of deliberately excluding or denying benefits to particular groups out of prejudice.

Since then, however, our understanding of discrimination has evolved, and our laws have expanded to protect against what we call “indirect discrimination”—forms of discrimination that don’t explicitly single out any person or group, but nevertheless have the indirect effect of disproportionately disadvantaging them, like physical fitness tests for occupations such as police and firefighters that aren’t calibrated to the needs of the job and that are much more difficult for women to pass than men, promotions tests that are much more difficult for certain racial minorities to pass than others, or dress codes that can’t be followed by members of certain religions. I argued in “Discrimination as Negligence” that in these kinds of cases and in the more traditional, intentional cases, we can see part of the injustice consisting in negligence towards members of these groups. They fail to take other people’s interests as seriously as they should take them.

I have a paper coming out in an anthology on Indirect Discrimination edited by Hugh Collins and Tarun Khaitan where I develop this argument further. I consider a variety of reasons why one might think that indirect discrimination is less serious from a moral standpoint than direct discrimination, and I reject these reasons. I then try to flesh out the idea that both forms of discrimination involve a form of negligence. What do I mean by “negligence,” here? Well, they fail to treat other people reasonably; they fail to give other people’s interests as much weight as they should be given in their deliberations. A nice example of this can be found in the report on sexual harassment in the R.C.M.P., which former Supreme Court Justice Marie Deschamps was commissioned to write two years ago. Part of her report focussed on indirect discrimination—the many absences and silences that perpetuate discrimination against women and LGBTQ members in the R.C.M.P. For instance there are no formal policies for reporting instances of sexual assault or sexual harassment, and there is no serious sexual harassment or sexual assault training for new recruits. I argue in this paper that these sorts of failures are just as morally culpable as deliberately disadvantaging someone.

Noësis: Your book will draw on ideas that you’ve already outlined in articles, and we wanted a bit of insight into how writing a book is different than getting your ideas ready in the form of a published article. How is this transition different and what are the challenges associated with it?

SM: To be honest with you I’d actually dispute the assumption underlying this question! Writing a book isn’t that different from writing an article. Although my book grows out of my thoughts in these various articles, it is not an attempt to tie these articles together. It is not a matter of cutting and pasting different parts of my older articles and sewing them all together. When I started writing the book, I started from scratch. I aimed to articulate some of the same ideas, and some newer ones, in a way that responded to many of the questions and suggestions I received when presenting my past articles at various workshops and conferences. Perhaps one difference between writing a book and writing articles, though, is that when you start to write an article for the first time, you don’t have the benefit of the views of all of your col-

leagues on what you are going to say. But by the time you are ready to write a book, you've presented to many different audiences, so you have a much better sense of what the objections are that you need to respond to, of which parts of your argument are likely to be misread and so need particularly careful re-stating, and of how best to frame certain points. Writing a book feels more like continuing a collective conversation, whereas writing the initial articles can sometimes feel like starting the conversation.

Noësis: Perhaps applying the subject of your research to the nature of the profession of academic philosophy itself, what forms of discrimination do you think still exist within the profession?

SM: There are sadly still many forms of discrimination that exist within academia and within philosophy. Some are forms of discrimination that the profession is aware of and is able to take active steps to combat, which gives me great hope. Others, though, result from a complex interaction of our policies and conventions, on the one hand, and social and cultural factors that we really have very little control over, on the other hand. So I'm not sure how to eliminate them. Let me give you some examples of each of these.

At the one end, the most obvious kind of discrimination is the patronizing and sexist remark. At one of my first conferences as a young academic, I was the only woman at the conference dinner. When dinner finished, one of the academics at the other end of the table turned to the conference organizer and said in a loud voice: "That was a lovely dinner, but I didn't get to talk to Sophia. Why didn't you bring along a woman for each of the rest of us?" You might think such casual, one-time remarks are relatively harmless, but they reflect deeply held stereotypes that aren't so harmless. Sometimes, when I write to academics to invite them to give a lecture here and they don't already know my work, they assume I'm a secretary or an administrative assistant because I have a woman's name. Some of my students refer to me as "Miss" or "Mrs." instead of "Professor," as though I couldn't be a professor and a woman at the same time. Once when I walked my two sons back to my car in the faculty parking lot after their day at school, a colleague saw me and said, "Hey Sophia, running a daycare, are you?" This was at a time when another male colleague had had a playpen in his office for months and brought his baby to work each day and received many compliments on his ability to juggle his scholarship with his devoted parenting. It seems that when a man brings his child into his office, he is given bonus points for being a serious scholar and a devoted father—but when a woman walks her children to her car, this is evidence that she is running a daycare.

I hesitate to tell these stories, partly because I worry that it makes me look as though I spend my time accumulating a catalogue of grievances—and of course that's not true. These stereotypes form a very small part of my academic life. But they are still a reality of my situation; although I can slough off any one such incident, it is tiring to have to combat one stereotype after another. And I can only imagine what it's like for members of racial minorities, religious minorities, and philosophers and philosophy students with disabili-

ities, all of whom spend a portion of their time and energy combatting our stereotypes about them.

In addition to stereotypes, there are also practices that we have as philosophers that tacitly privilege certain groups over others. For instance, as I'm sure all of you have found out, the style of philosophical argument among academic philosophers at conferences is often quite combative. You're thought of as strong and smart if you give a fast, quick, fierce rebuttal or ask a pointed, aggressive question. That is not true everywhere, or of everyone: There are some philosophers who have gained great respect who move more slowly and more thoughtfully. But generally the tone of philosophical discussions is aggressive. This makes it harder for many women, who have been socialized to be more conciliatory and collaborative. It also makes it harder for people whose cultures value respectful deference to people in positions of authority or who have been raised to speak in a more measured way only after a long period of thought. I do think philosophers are aware of this problem and I know of many who are trying to change the tone of our discussions to make them more open to a variety of styles of oral argument. I'm hopeful that within the span of your careers as philosophers this will change. But it will only change if enough of us have the will to make it happen.

So these are some of the forms of discrimination that I've experienced that still occur within academic philosophy, and that I'm optimistic will be lessened over the years. But there are others that are going to be more difficult to change. Remember earlier I spoke about the "tacit structural accommodations" that make things easier for certain groups rather than others? It's still the case that as an academic you are expected to produce some of your most significant work before you come up for tenure. These are women's childbearing years, and it is still the case that, for a variety of social reasons, women more often get saddled with the bulk of the childcare and with the responsibility of arranging child-care and providing back-up care themselves when their primary caregiver is unavailable.

There are also inequalities that result from parental leaves, which I have no idea what to do about. Many male academics use their pre-tenure parental leaves to get ahead on their first book, whereas more female academics use them as parental leaves, perhaps partly because they need time to recover from their child's birth or because many opt to breastfeed their child. Unfortunately, what this means is that instead of parental leave helping to equalize the playing field, it actually pushes women doubly behind: They have been off "doing nothing" in academic terms, whereas their male counterparts have in effect had a sabbatical and have pushed ahead on their books. What can we do about this, though? Should we deny men parental leave? Of course not—that would be reverse discrimination and equally objectionable. Should we credit women on parental leave with having written articles that they did not write—as some academics have suggested? This sounds ludicrous to me: It would be extremely unfair to the people who make many sacrifices in order actually to write their articles or books. So I'm at a loss here. But I think it would help to

acknowledge that there's an issue, even if we ultimately conclude that there is no obvious solution to it.

Noësis: Many young philosophy students make the decision to pursue a career in the legal profession, and sometimes, this is the result of pressures surrounding the job market in academic philosophy. How do you think students like this can keep their philosophical interests alive while they get their legal training?

SM: That's a great question. One recommendation I'd make is to choose a law school that is more theoretical in its approach and at an institution that also has a strong philosophy department. Each law school has its own culture, and there are many wonderful law schools that have more of a philosophical bent and closer ties with the philosophy departments at those universities. For instance, Yale, Columbia, Chicago, NYU, and UCLA all have very strong law faculties that are decidedly philosophical in their orientation and that might make someone like you happier while going through law school!

That said, I have to say that the law is its own kind of language. One piece of advice I have for philosophy students who want to go into law is that it is a good idea to try to learn the legal language first and not assume that it is going to be like philosophy. Courts, when they reason through judgments, are decidedly unlike philosophers reasoning through judgments. That's why, when our Supreme Court was faced with David Malmo-Levine reading John Stuart Mill in *R. v. Malmo-Levine*, they didn't say: "Wonderful: John Stuart Mill, he is a brilliant philosopher; he has settled the question for us of how to interpret liberty in section 7 of the Charter and settled whether we should adopt the harm principle as a principle of fundamental justice in Canadian law!" The Court has to come up with principles that are relatively easy to apply and are sufficiently general so that in future cases the Court doesn't find itself hemmed in by things that it has said now. Judges must constantly consider the different perspectives that can be brought to bear on the law. I was lucky enough to clerk for our Chief Justice, Beverley McLachlin. She taught me a lot about the various concerns that judges have that philosophers don't. So as a law student, you need to learn about these concerns and try to understand what legal reasoning involves, rather than assuming that it is or ought to be the same as philosophical reasoning.

Noësis: You mentioned some American law schools that are particularly philosophically oriented. What would you say about philosophical culture at some of their Canadian counterparts?

SM: I would say that U of T is obviously very strong in this regard. We have a wonderful, theoretically focussed law faculty. But there are a number of Canadian law schools that are very strong philosophically as well. As an example, Queen's University has a terrific group of junior faculty working at the intersection of law and philosophy. Osgoode also has some fine legal theorists and a strong commitment to bringing in top-notch speakers in legal theory. Even if you are not at a law school that does law in a philosophical way, you can continue attending philosophy conferences and going to Colloquia in

your University's Philosophy Department. You could even start up a reading group with fellow philosophers studying law! That's something I did in law school, along with a friend, Malcolm Thorburn, who is now a colleague of mine here at the Law Faculty. We were both philosophy students who had entered law school and were desperate to keep reading philosophy. So we got a group of fellow philosophy students together and read through recently published books in moral and political philosophy.

Noësis: By way of concluding, what advice, if any, do you have for philosophy students who have hopes of a career in academia?

SM: I would say that, just as I mentioned that law has its own language, each area of philosophy has its own language, and you have to learn it before you try to change it. You have to learn how particular debates have historically been framed, which concepts people have conventionally used to discuss certain issues, and what has motivated them. You need to speak the language fluently before you can then use it to say what there aren't yet words for.

There is a beautiful metaphor that comes to my mind here, used by a character in Tom Stoppard's play, *Arcadia*. If you haven't read that play, you must: Stoppard is a brilliant and very philosophical playwright. Well, at one point in the play, Valentine says: "You can't open a door 'til there's a house." Hannah replies: "I thought that's what genius was." In a sense, she is right. Genius is opening a door when there isn't a house there, or using language to say what there didn't used to be words to say. But you can only do this when you have mastered enough of the language to be able to make up words in that language—or, to keep using Stoppard's metaphor, when you know enough about house-building to know where the door might be.

I want also to go back to something I said earlier, when I was discussing Chris Korsgaard's view of philosophical argument. I think your aim should also be to tell a story about something that you think is genuinely important. Philosophy at its best isn't just a group of smart people playing clever games. Philosophy should touch our lives. It should have something to say to each of us, something that answers to our most sincere questions, our deepest longings, our most human concerns.

NOËSIS XVIII

LEADERSHIP, FREEDOM, AND EMOTION

IN CONVERSATION WITH MARTIN PICKAVÉ

10 March 2017

Martin Pickavé is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto, where he is associated with the Centre for Medieval Studies. He also currently serves as Chair of the Department of Philosophy and as Canada Research Chair in Medieval Philosophy. His current research project investigates medieval philosophy of mind (including emotion and cognitive psychology), as well as medieval metaphysics and debates surrounding free will in the philosophy of action. In this wide-ranging conversation with Noësis editors Amit Singh, Mat Armstrong, and Lucas Bennett, Professor Pickavé discusses his education and early interests in academia, his research interests in the history of philosophy, his role as Chair, and the profession of academic philosophy more broadly.

Noësis: Thanks for speaking with us. We want to start by asking you how you got into the world of philosophy. When did you develop an interest in philosophy and what led to that interest?

MP: That must have happened in high school around the time when I was fifteen or sixteen. We didn't have high school philosophy courses at that time in Germany, but I read a lot in my spare time. At one point I came across Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, and I just thought that it was an amazing book. So I got into philosophy through the social theory and Frankfurt School angle. I also read a lot of Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, and Camus. I was sort of a bookish guy, and that led me inevitably to philosophy, which is not an uncommon *parcours*, I think.

I also had a strong interest in math and physics, but when I went to university I felt that despite a certain closeness between philosophy, math, and physics, the way these disciplines were studied in university—at least in Germany at that time—made them slightly incompatible. In my undergrad days, philosophy courses were very open-ended, whereas math and physics came with lots of lecture time and tutorials. In the latter you would immediately see

what you learned, but not so in the former. So, I decided to give philosophy a try first, and if I didn't enjoy it, I would go back to math—but I loved it.

Noësis: Did you decide when you were an undergraduate that you wanted a career in academia?

MP: Of course not! In hindsight, I think I was fairly naïve. I didn't really worry about career options. At least during my first years in university, I just did what I found intellectually most stimulating. In Germany, most students in the Humanities become high school teachers, so maybe I thought I could always fall back on that option. My uncle was a professor of Geography and that gave me some perspective on what it is to choose an academic career, but my parents were not very academically-minded people.

Noësis: You did your graduate work, and indeed the entirety of your post-secondary education in Europe—Germany specifically. You also had the experience of teaching there. Can you comment on differences, if any, in the styles or cultures of teaching and learning philosophy between North America and Europe?

MP: I can try. A lot of things have changed in Germany since I moved to Toronto thirteen or so years ago. Right at the time I moved, German universities introduced the B.A. This was part of a Europe-wide reform of universities and degree programs, which is known as the Bologna process. The experiences that German students now have are very different from the ones I had. All this is to say that what I am going to say may be outdated.

When I was a student, philosophy students in Germany were an odd bunch. Although philosophy still has a high cultural prestige, philosophy students and philosophy departments did not always live up to this. In my time, philosophy was a fairly easy subject and it thus attracted many students who didn't know what else to study, and then there were also those who didn't really fit in. The curriculum was almost non-existent. You had to do three “*Scheine*” (exams, usually research papers) in your first two years and three more in years three and four. If you wanted to learn something, you had to make sure you went to the right lectures (no exams!) and make it a habit to go to the library by yourself and study whatever you thought you needed to know. The good thing about this system is that it was extremely liberating; the flipside is that many people dropped right after the first year.

I studied first in Freiburg and then in Cologne. As an undergrad in Freiburg—a wonderful city in Southern Germany—you would basically go to the library in the morning, read for an hour, then go to a lecture that everyone else was talking about—in art history, or law, or whatever (occasionally, philosophy)—and then go back to a library, chat with friends and other students outside the library, get in heated discussions about various topics, like Quine or Heidegger, and then continue like this for the rest of the day. It was a very intensive atmosphere that was mostly driven by everyone's passion for what they were studying. From a societal point of view, it was maybe the worst possible design, but for a self-driven person it was quite amazing. So that's the first difference that comes to mind.

Secondly, we didn't have this B.A.-M.A. distinction. The first degree would be an M.A.—not like an M.A. here. It would be similar to a B.A. here, and many people would take five, six, or seven years to finish. The “eternal student” was (and still is) a staple of German culture. Since there were no tuition fees, there were less reasons to worry. (Note that after a short experiment with modest tuition fees, tuition fees have again disappeared in Germany.) As I said earlier, this has changed a lot. Now there are three-year B.A. programs and a large variety of M.A. programs. When I enrolled in Freiburg, you could do the Ph.D. as your first degree (no one did this option, of course—you had to be very full of yourself to choose this!). Now, European universities have also adopted the distinction between undergraduate and graduate studies, which didn't exist before.

There was also an assumption that you'd start in one university and after two years move to another one. Many also did a term or year abroad in another country. The European Union has a fantastic scheme called “Erasmus,” which incentivises study abroad. A lot of people in my time did that, and so did I. I went to Rome, where I met my wife, who was also doing an Erasmus year abroad. European students are much more mobile. In Europe, there is a premium on international experience. The idea is to immerse oneself in a different culture and pick up a language. Students here, if they go abroad, often have courses in English, often taught by faculty from their home university, just in another country. This is nice, but not the same experience.

Despite what I just said, I think there is a lot to be said in favour of a stricter curriculum of the sort we have in Canada and the U.S. If you talk to a philosophy student in North America, you get a good sense as to whether they are a first-, second-, third-, or fourth-year student. If you talk to a philosophy student in Germany you often no clue whether they have just started or have studied for five years. However, there are certain personality types for whom liberty is the right setup.

Noësis: Who were some of your mentors and people you personally look up to? How do they continue to influence the way you think and write and do philosophy today?

MP: There were certain people fairly early on in my studies to whom I looked up. Some of them were older students with whom I had discussions about philosophy in front of the philosophy library in Freiburg—I am still in contact with some of them. Then there was a professor in Freiburg, Klaus Jacobi, who influenced me a lot. He didn't do so actively, i.e., by telling me what I should do and read. Rather the opposite. I thought he was quite strict and severe. You would only see him in office hours (or talk to him) if you really had a question or concern. But I really liked his pedagogy and the questions he was pursuing (coincidentally, he was also working on medieval philosophy). So I went to the library and read what he published. I also credit him for moving on to Cologne, where I continued.

Later in my career, when I was writing my dissertation, my supervisor (Jan Aertsen) was a mentor to me. He helped me to become a professional

philosopher. He too never taught me anything by telling me what to do or how to do it. He had this way of steering me in the right direction, so that I could find things out for myself. I think of him quite a lot, although I work now on completely different topics. There was also another professor from a different university with whom I was in frequent contact. I would occasionally send him my stuff or meet with him when I was in town. You might say that none of these were real mentorship relationships, and maybe that is correct. But I think it's a good idea to seek out people whose work or approach you admire—just don't stalk them!

Mentors are obviously very important, not just for those choosing an academic career, but also for those who study for a B.A. and then go on to a professional career in another area. However, as with all things mentoring can be good and bad. You will make the best of a mentorship relation if you have a certain sense of direction. Then, I think, it can really empower you. But there is also a certain form of mentoring which I take to be infantilizing and, maybe, sometimes we do too much of this. You don't need a mentor to tell you what is supposed to be common sense. Whereas some mentoring may actually make you worse off, the good kind really pushes you into a completely different league.

In my view, the most important feature of a mentor is that the mentor can be frank with you. When you seek out a mentor, make sure you find someone from whom you can take criticism and who is willing to criticize you. In an academic context, you want someone who is willing to tell you: "Oh, this is really not good. You should not publish this." The older you get in academia (and it's fairly early on), the more people will say to you, "Oh, this is great," or, "Good work," but that's not actually what they mean. They may simply mean, "Oh, this is good work in comparison to all the other things I read today." People often think, "Oh, so and so criticized me; that's very impolite." Having a capacity to take on criticism is something laudable. I know, criticism is difficult (at least for me), but having someone who is willing to spend time engaging with you and your work and with whom you can "let down the guard" is something very positive.

Noësis: With regards to curriculum and running the Department, what are the main goals of the Department right now, and specifically for you in your tenure as Chair? What are you trying to accomplish?

MP: That's a big question! Right now I try to focus on two things. The first has more directly to do with the programs. As you may have seen from the announcements for job talks, the Department is currently hiring for a couple of open positions. Because of retirements and resignations we have lost some faculty members over the last five years and we are now trying to fill the ranks. This is a great opportunity for the department that will shape it for the next ten to twenty years.

Once the Department is again at full strength we will turn our attention to the curriculum; to a certain extent we have already begun to do so. We last revamped the curriculum about ten years ago, so it is time to have a new

look. I don't think a lot of things need fixing, but it's good to revisit it from time to time. The success of our undergrads, I think, shows that the curriculum makes sense. Our new hires will help us to revitalize the Philosophy and Physics Specialist and the Philosophy and Math Specialist. Not that these programs will ever be as big as our Bioethics Major or Minor, but I think every department of a certain reputation should have some of these. We also want to explore things like connections with the Faculty of Law and develop a minor, though we don't want to double up on the existing Ethics, Society, and Law Program. This year we started a Philosophy for Scientists course. One of the ideas behind this class is to get students in the sciences excited about philosophy. Perhaps this will lead them to pick up a minor in philosophy and take upper-year courses on the basis of that. This is so far an experiment, and we have to see where it is going. Last but not least, writing support is a top priority.

There are certain transferrable skills you learn in university, and writing is one of them. But I think we can do a little bit more in regards to these transferrable skills and further develop the writing support program in our tutorials. The University as a whole invests a lot in writing support, but I think there's more to be done at the divisional level.

The second main focus is more outward-looking. As you know, the Department participates in backpack-2-briefcase (b2b) events. You may have noticed that they are badly attended. I think we should organize these sort of activities at the department level, in collaboration with the b2b program, but not driven by the Faculty of Arts and Science. Some students told me that they don't like the "briefcase" aspect. Maybe they are unrepresentative, but the b2b program is perhaps seen as pushing too much in one direction. I think we have an amazing network of alumni both in the GTA and further away, and it would be good for our undergraduates to get to know some of them and to learn about their career paths. This would help the transition from the B.A. to the next career step, as you usually don't get a job with a B.A. in philosophy—or indeed a B.A. in any discipline. This will help people think about their options, of which there are many. It is often the case that you have to open people's imaginations. Even though we have a lot of undergraduates—in terms of undergraduates, we have the largest philosophy program in North America—it's hard to get many of them in a room outside classes. You do great things with Noësis and there are early-year programs, but it's surprising how few people come out for those. We should look into other ways. I don't know if you noticed, but this year, for example, we started a logic lab for the Intro Logic class (PHL245), which some students find challenging. As a result, more undergraduates come to the Department. One of the factors is that the location of the Department is not ideal for undergraduates. For undergraduates, most of the action is down south around UC, Sid Smith, and so on, so we are a bit remote, even though we are close to the subway station. Another aspect of this look outwards has less directly to do with undergraduate programs: We would like to strengthen our relations with high schools in the GTA. In the past we

had many connections and we ran the Aristotle high school essay competition for high school students. Unfortunately, this has been dormant for a couple of years now. There's a lot of potential for development. Luckily, the Department will get a new staff person whose portfolio will include outreach activities.

Noësis: Oh wow, that sounds wonderful!

MP: The relations with the schools have been dormant for a while at least in part because colleagues with strong personal contacts with the schools have retired. But we are trying to relaunch our relationship, and we had some preliminary meetings with people from OPTA—the Ontario Philosophy Teachers Association. There will be more on this front, hopefully, in the fall. These measures are tied to the idea that philosophy, I think, should have a larger footprint on Canadian society. It is only natural for this Department to take a leading role here, because we are not only the biggest, but also the most important in Canada. Philosophy could be more in the public sphere, and I think doing more with schools is one element of that.

Noësis: With regards to writing support, I know the Philosophy Department has an excellent resource in the Philosophy Essay Clinic, which students can find out about online through the Department's website. With these other writing support programs, are you thinking about them in terms of integration with classes?

MP: Yes, absolutely.

Noësis: So less of an opt-in style resource, and more part of the curriculum?

MP: Exactly. If you tell students in a class or even write on an essay, "If you are unsure about your writing, please seek help," then the uptake is very limited. There is a certain stigma attached to the idea of not being a good writer. Only a few people take up the services of the Essay Clinic. Sometimes it are those who need them the least. But we think that the help the Essay Clinic can provide can have a huge impact on all students, especially those struggling in the class.

Undergrads are under enormous pressure, with a twelve-week term and all the essay writing and so on. But often it helps to write an essay fairly quickly in the first three days after receiving the assignment and then let it rest a little bit, having someone read it over, and then do some revisions. Just by writing something down and then thinking about it unconsciously, you will improve your writing so much more than booking out two days at the end. I know this sounds like a fairy tale!

But that is how it should be. Writing support can be included in a better way in the tutorials, I think. In a way, academics know about this the least. When I meet people from the ELL program—English Language Learning—I learn a lot of things that I didn't know about how writing can be taught. You're not an expert on how to teach writing just because you are a Philosophy professor—or an English professor, for that matter. We can definitely improve on that. Personally, I think it took me a long time to write effectively.

Writing is like a tool, and there are various ways to handle a tool. The first

thing you have to learn when you write is that there are different registers. An email is not the same as a letter, which is not the same as an essay, which is not the same as a short paragraph in which you make a case for something. If you are aware that there are these different registers and different things you can do with language, you've learned the most important thing. The questions about details such as, "Should I use 'I' or 'we'?" or, "How much time should I spend on the introduction?" kind of disappear. Instead, you will be thinking about what point you want to convey in a text and what kind of genre the text is. I'm talking too much here, but I think writing is also tied to reading.

Noësis: Not at all! Can you expand on that?

MP: If you want to learn how to write well, you need to learn how to read well. You need to be aware of things like, "Why is this paragraph here?" "Why does the author make this move?" "Why does she stop here?" and so on. Reading is just the other side of the coin of writing. And then, of course, grammar and punctuation are important—but for most of these things, the spell-checker does enormous work!

Noësis: Thank you for that really interesting response. We were hoping to ask you one last question about your perspective as Chair. What do you think are the strengths of our Department here at Toronto?

MP: I think there's a distinct flavour to the teaching of philosophy at the University of Toronto, which is the strong combination of systematic and historical approaches. We have maybe the best coverage in history of philosophy among any philosophy department in North America. But it is not compartmentalized in that you either only do history of philosophy or you only do work in contemporary philosophy. All of this is to say that undergraduates come out of this program with a really solid background, and we are not surprised every year when some of you apply for graduate school and get into the very top programs. People know that very few people at this university have an A or 4.0 GPA because we have high grading standards. Graduate schools know that if students have a good degree from U of T, then they know what they are doing and will be successful as grad students. This is not to say, of course, that as a program we are just about producing good graduate students—that is not the point.

I think the historical breadth and the lack of one-sidedness in this regard is one of the strengths of the Department's teaching. Of course, when you talk about research, which flows out of this, we have great strength in the history of philosophy, value theory broadly construed—including political philosophy—and philosophy of mind and language.

There are, however, some areas where we should catch up a bit—and now I'm talking about the tri-campus Department which involves the Philosophy Departments at UTM and UTSC. Even with that larger group, there are some gaps. One area where we have flagrant gaps is non-Western Philosophy. We have one colleague [Vincent Shen] teaching Chinese Philosophy, but that is about it. You might think, "Well, Toronto is the most diverse city in the world—so why is that not reflected?"

Noësis: That seems a fair question to ask.

MP: I can tell you that in every meeting where we talk about future hiring, this issue comes up—we are aware of this issue. However, when you hire at a research university, it is not just about having people in the classroom; you are hiring Faculty members who will train future professors in the area as well, so it is not so easy to make a good appointment in these smaller areas. Nevertheless, I expect us to conduct a search in non-Western Philosophy in the near future. You asked me about strengths, but there are also weaknesses!

The size of the program represents another strength. I don't know what you do among the undergraduate population, but you can learn a lot amongst yourselves and from your peers.

Noësis: Agreed.

MP: You and your fellow students take different sets of classes, and you can learn from them about what sort of things they are into, and that's great. Whenever colleagues at other departments ask me how philosophy is doing at U of T, I tell them the number of majors we have just downtown—they are always flabbergasted!

Noësis: That is something we benefit from at Noësis as well, as we are always able to get quality editors for the board and solid submissions in diverse areas of philosophical inquiry for our publications. We are able to do these things because there are so many talented undergraduates at the Department.

MP: Right.

Noësis: Moving towards some of your research interests: In addition to being Chair, you are well known among undergraduates here for teaching medieval philosophy courses as well as upper-year courses on freedom and philosophy of action. Where do your own views lie on the intensely debated topic of free will and determinism, which has survived long stretches in the history of philosophy? How has your training in medieval and early modern philosophy shaped your view?

MP: When I teach the free will class (PHL341)—which is one of my favourites because it attracts really good students and I find the topic very exciting—I try to never tell students what position I myself take in this debate! We go through all the major positions and then circle back for a general assessment of the different views. I would never say this in class, but I have strong sympathies with libertarianism. I think that compatibilist accounts of free will are a bit lazy; they make a lot of interesting technical moves, for example when they employ the 'conditional analysis' to account for our "power to do otherwise," but they are not very successful in addressing some of the basic intuitions we have about our own agency. Having said this, free will is a tough problem—though most philosophical problems are tough—because it is difficult to see where to start and how to weigh "the evidence." On the one hand, there are the natural sciences and physics; obviously what they say should count for something. On the other hand, there are intuitions we have about ourselves. And there are other factors as well. The competing positions in the free will debate weigh these factors differently. I usually don't think that

intuitions count for that much, but in this case they seem to matter a lot.

Maybe this is how the historical work helps: Most philosophers in the Middle Ages are libertarians. But they are so for different reasons than contemporary libertarians. A lot of them, for instance, think that freedom does not involve the power to do otherwise. Freedom does involve a form of spontaneity that is incompatible with certain forms of necessitation, especially causal necessitation, but they do not believe that you only have free will when you have the power to do otherwise. The medievals too run Frankfurt-style scenarios, with which they try to show that the power to do otherwise is irrelevant for moral responsibility. Their thinking is based on the idea that freedom is a perfection, and, if freedom were to involve a power to do otherwise, including acting against what is rational, then freedom looks like a defect. If your freedom were to consist in the power to do or to choose what is not or does not appear right to you, then it looks like it's not a perfection, and we think of freedom as something we'd rather have than not have, etc. In this way, you might think that the research on medieval accounts of freedom can help to understand that there might be other forms of libertarianism out there than the major ones people deal with in the contemporary period.

I think that medieval philosophy is very exciting because there is this period in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century—from Aquinas's death to Ockham's death—where you have a lot of back-and-forth debates among philosophers in Oxford and Paris that have striking similarities with twentieth-century philosophy. The debates exhibit a high level of sophistication and originality. The problem is that you can almost never teach them because the relevant texts are not translated into English. There are some major figures you've heard of, such as William of Ockham, who was a nominalist, and John Duns Scotus, who's actually one of the main defender of libertarianism about free will (although he's actually an outlier, since he thinks freedom consists in having the power to do otherwise). But many of their texts are unavailable to English-language students.

Noësis: With regard to some of your work in medieval theories on emotion, we wanted to ask about the volume of essays you edited with Lisa Shapiro called *Emotion and Cognitive Life in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*. There, you write in the introduction—I think in reference to contemporary accounts—that many of these accounts of the motivational role of emotions discount the many ways in which emotions figure in our cognitive lives. You add that, in this way, they often invoke emotions as explanations for why agents act contrary to rational judgment. Can you say a little more about why you think this view is misguided and maybe a little bit more as well about what role emotions have to play in cognition more broadly?

MP: Well, that might be a part that Lisa wrote! Just joking. The picture I am presenting now is maybe a bit stereotypical, after thirty, forty years of research. But for a long time in the 20th century philosophers didn't pay much attention to the emotions. The approach was something like this: "Well, we are interested in human agency, and human agency is rational agency." Emo-

tions seem to fall out of the picture, because they seem to be something else. Maybe they are not irrational, but they are arational. For sure, emotions are sources of behaviour, but not rational ones. In the book, we take issue with this view and we are focusing on a couple of authors through the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period, from Augustine to Hume, who focus—in very different ways—on the rationality of our emotions and their role in rational life. Some of the papers, for example, address the relationship between emotions and cognition (I use the term ‘cognition’ broadly, so that it includes perception; I don’t use it in the Kantian or contemporary sense). Clearly emotions seem to be more cognition-like than some people are willing to allow at first. Like cognitive acts, emotions are about something—they have intentionality. Some people even think—actually this is an old view—that emotions express value judgments. So how do the various authors in the Middle Ages or the Early Modern Period account for or discount the cognitive function or role of emotions? The chapters do this in very different ways. I can tell you about my chapter in this book.

Noësis: Yes, please.

MP: In my chapter in this book, I discuss a fourteenth-century author, Adam Wodeham, a disciple of William of Ockham. He discusses the relationship between emotions and cognition. Many medieval authors think that emotions are neither acts of perception nor acts of thought; they think emotions are triggered by perceptions or thoughts. My perception of something dangerous will cause in me fear, and the fear may then lead me to a further perception, namely, the perception of my current affective state. But these medieval philosophers are very adamant about the fact that the emotions themselves are not cognitions. Wodeham thinks this is misguided. He holds that emotions are also themselves cognitions. He argues for this on the basis of the fact that emotions have intentionality, and he thinks that intentionality is the mark of the cognitive. That’s kind of the short story of the paper.

Noësis: In terms of bringing the ideas of medieval philosophers on emotions into the modern, contemporary period today, do you think that the development of this idea of intentionality as a key identifying feature of emotions is a medieval legacy to contemporary thought on emotions?

MP: I actually think that with respect to philosophizing about the emotions there was a big break between the medieval and the early modern periods. You can notice this break even in the terminology. As I noted before, for the vast majority of medieval philosophers, emotions are appetitive states (as opposed to cognitions). Of course, you can’t experience an emotion without grasping the object of the emotions, and experiencing an emotion has a certain feeling aspect to it, but these two cognitive states are antecedent and consequent with respect to the emotion proper. The emotion itself is the thing in the middle, an appetitive state, which is an embodied state—emotions for them are primarily embodied. If you didn’t have a body, you wouldn’t have an emotion. Now, in the early modern period you will notice that philosophers refer to phenomena such as fear, anger, love, hate, etc. as sentiments, feelings, etc. The expres-

sion ‘sentiment’ comes from the Latin word ‘*sentire*’, which means ‘sensing’. Descartes referred to emotions as ‘*pensées*’—‘thoughts’. The vocabulary already indicates that early modern authors think about emotions more like cognitive acts themselves.

Noësis: So they take emotions out of the body and put them up in the mind?

MP: Yes. So historically speaking, there’s a real break. Now, having said this, I think actually that the beauty of studying the history of philosophy lies not in the fact that you can trace ideas back to previous times. (That’s more what the historian of ideas is concerned with.) In my view, philosophy is a kind of a joint project. Philosophers from different backgrounds are working on different aspects of any given problem, and working on the history of philosophy helps you to see things sometimes differently because, for starters, philosophers of the past write in a different language. This sometimes helps us to see how the framing of a question matters and whether framing a question in a certain way even makes sense or not. That’s one of the (many) merits of doing history of philosophy. I am very skeptical of some of the hyper-cognitivist accounts of emotions going around these days. It may well be that my research into the history of philosophical accounts of the emotions is one of the reasons for my skepticism.

I think in general that the history of philosophy allows you to think about philosophical problems from a different perspective. Here’s maybe an easier case: Look at people studying Aristotle and Aristotle’s ethics. There’s a fair amount of figuring out what Aristotle himself said, of course, but the point of doing history of philosophy is not to say things like, “Oh, person *x* wrote this book a hundred years ago.” Historians of philosophy return to the philosophers of the past again and again because they need to reappropriate the past in light of a contemporary philosophical horizon. That’s why studies on, say, Aristotle’s account of the virtues are more than just retellings of ancient texts; they’re philosophy explorations of the virtues. The same applies to research on medieval philosophy: Using your contemporary conceptual framework, you try to understand what medieval philosophers were worrying about. This also lets you to see and explore the differences—and maybe the fruitfulness of the differences—between classical and contemporary approaches.

Noësis: You mentioned that one of the benefits is an ability of looking at a different language to see a different perspective in the different linguistic fabric. Do you have any other comments on the benefits or challenges of doing multilingual philosophy, both in your research and in your interactions with other scholars?

MP: I find it very difficult to speak about philosophy in a different language. I have sometimes a hard time explaining philosophy in German, even though it’s my native tongue. There is a certain technical vocabulary and there are conceptual frameworks that you acquire in English, and it’s difficult to reformulate stuff even in your native tongue. Having said that, I think it’s good to know different languages; it allows you to engage with (the rather large

group of) non-Anglophone philosophers.

The Department actually has a couple of partnerships with Germany. In the area of early modern philosophy, we have regular meetings with students and colleagues from Berlin and Groningen (NL). I think for our graduate students, even though the conference language is English, it is interesting to realize, “Oh, there’s someone in Germany or the Netherlands who is working on something similar, and they’re reading very different literature.” That’s kind of eye-opening because there’s a whole part of the philosophical library that you can only access if you know some basic German or French—or Italian, for that matter. Also, I think there’s an intrinsic pleasure in knowing a different language.

Having said this, I think that especially in philosophy it helps to have some basic understanding of another language, because there are some philosophical problems that may just be a result of set-up of the language in which you philosophize. For example, Fichte wrote a book, *Wissenschaftslehre* (actually he wrote more than one *Wissenschaftslehre*). It is very difficult to translate this title into English. Some people translate *Wissenschaftslehre* as *Theory of Cognition* or *Theory and Discipline of Science*, but these don’t quite capture it. If you reflect on this, you may wonder whether the fact that you can’t translate something tells you something. In the positive case, you conclude that there’s maybe a deficit in the English language; in the negative case, you move to the conclusion that there may be no such thing in the first place. Another example would be Heidegger, who is famous for his neologisms. Maybe it is true that our ordinary language is so impoverished that we have to create neologisms because there are certain things that can’t otherwise be expressed. But there is always the risk that new locutions lead to pseudo-problems.

Noēsis: You were mentioning the problem of translation and how that’s definitely an issue when we transition from German to English. Is there anything in the work that you’ve done that’s a classic example of this, where there has been a huge shift in how a technical term has been translated and now people are thinking it might not be that way and that shifts the whole perspective on translating the work of the philosopher?

MP: There are some classic examples in the history of philosophy of translations that were really, really important. The most important example is perhaps the translation of the Aristotelian term, ‘ousia’ (‘substance’). In Latin, the term was translated sometimes as ‘*substantia*’ (‘substance’), sometimes as ‘*essentia*’ (‘essence’), and through the Latin these terms have entered the English language. Yet it is natural to think that substance and essence are not the same. Substances are the basic entities in the world; and it is through its essence that this substance (say, a horse) is different from another (say, a human being). You can see that on the one hand the distinction between ‘substance’ and ‘essence’ allows for a new set of questions (e.g., “What is the essence of a substance?” “Do individual substance have their own individual essences?”), but on the other hand it can make the understanding of Aristotle’s concept of ‘ousia’ rather complicated.

Noësis: Interesting! Do you have a current research project or a future one you can tell us about?

MP: My current project is a book on free will in later medieval philosophy. In this book I am focusing primarily on the debate as it unfolded in the late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries. I mentioned Duns Scotus before. He is an important philosopher in this period and one of the few who think that freedom consists in the possession of a power to do otherwise. His view is attacked by contemporaries, and even his followers found his teaching on free will to be almost incomprehensible. However this may be, he triggered a debate on which my book will focus—a debate that lead to some very interesting views on the nature of human freedom. I have been working on and off on this project and collected a lot of materials. Unfortunately, my job as chair doesn't allow me much time for my own research. But this topic is what keeps me up at night and I'm looking forward to the summer when I can do a bit more writing.

Noësis: We'd be interested to hear from you, by way of conclusion, what advice you have for philosophy students who have ideas of a career in academia.

MP: I don't really have any advice. It's very difficult to plan for a career in academia. I personally never thought about spending my life teaching and doing research in philosophy. It came more or less by accident; I really liked what I studied first in Freiburg and then in Cologne. After I finished my M.A. thesis (which as I mentioned was a first degree at that time), my supervisor asked me if I wanted to continue and do a Ph.D. And so one thing led to another. There was no active planning involved. Maybe that was a bit naïve. You have to be really, really driven, and I guess I was, and it showed.

I'm almost tempted to say, "Don't trust when people give you advice," but I shouldn't say that. I just think that students often get too much advice. If you get too much advice, you run the risk of doing things only because you are told to do them. Here's an example that won't make me many friends: If you look at any given area in philosophy nowadays, you will be able to find within this area certain clusters of research topics everyone pursuing a Ph.D. works on. This is because students think, "Oh, this is a central debate in ethics, or ancient philosophy, or epistemology, etc., and if I want to get a job, I really have to work on this area because senior people in the field have told me that otherwise I will not get a job—the hiring committee will think that what I do is too obscure." And yes, there is some truth to this line of thought. Despite what they will say, academics are very conservative when it comes to judgments about what is interesting and what is uninteresting work. But this line of thought also leads to a certain narrowness in the profession, since it creates a convergence towards the same problems and truly groundbreaking work doesn't get done. Moreover, when you then get to the stage at which you apply for a job, there will likely be ten other people working on exactly the same topic. So I'm not sure if this actually gives you an advantage since you become just one number in a big group.

In spite of what I just said, let me give one piece of advice—not just for academia, but also for other aspects of professional life: Try to pursue things that interest you, that give you pleasure, and that also distinguish you from others and play to your talents. And when you do so, don't give up at the first obstacle that you encounter. For you will encounter many obstacles. If you worry about getting a job, pursue endeavors that make your CV stand out. If you are pursuing a Ph.D., try to find an approach that makes your work special. Do not only think about things that make you conform to the expectation in the profession or in public life. Yes, of course, to get through life, there has to be a certain element of conformity, but living out your originality has huge benefits too. This can mean spending some time abroad or learning some fancy skill that no one else has—or something else. (By the way: It is possible to stand out through rude behaviour and an obnoxious personality—that's obviously not what I have in mind.)

Don't just do things that other people say are useful. You have a brain, and while it's very useful to do things through the exercise of which you use even the last cell of your brain, many people have a very impoverished understanding of what's useful. What is reading Plato useful for? Well, I guess it is of no use to the cat or the mule or the monkey. But, I guess you are aiming higher. And besides, whatever you do may be useful for other things you don't even know about yet.

NOËSIS XVIII

ONLINE PUBLICATION ABSTRACTS

NOESISJOURNAL.WORDPRESS.COM

**WHY WE DON'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE: DENYING THE
DENY-THE-DESCRIPTION SOLUTION TO THE
COLLECTIVE HARM PROBLEM OF ANTHROPOGENIC
CLIMATE CHANGE**

SPENCER KNIBUTAT

Is it wrong to order food by car-delivery rather than by bicycle-delivery? Some argue that you should order by bicycle, since this will produce fewer greenhouse gases and will not contribute to causing Anthropogenic Climate Change—a change which can have potentially harmful environmental effects. Disagreement on this issue seems to arise over the problem of how to assign moral blame in cases of collective harm—cases where one single action will not directly result in any harm and may not even seem to make a difference. Anthropogenic Climate Change seems to be a case of collective harm; the contribution of greenhouse gases by an individual seems to have no effect on how much harm is actually produced and seems to make no difference to Anthropogenic Climate Change. While some claim that an individual's action is not, therefore, morally wrong even if it produces greenhouse gases, others advocate for a “Deny-the-Description” approach, insisting that the act of an individual does make a difference with respect to the overall harm produced, and can therefore be deemed morally wrong. In this paper, the author attempts to refute a particularly promising version of the “Deny-the-Description” approach, propounded by Hiller (2011). Hiller argues that greenhouse gas-producing acts are all morally condemnable because they generate significant expected harm. This paper argues against Hiller, insisting that it is actually not wrong to perform these kinds of actions (e.g., to order by car rather than by bicycle), since no expected harm arises.

NON-IDENTITY AND THE PROBLEM OF HARM: A CRITIQUE OF HARTZELL-NICHOLS'S MODEL OF HARM

TOM FEORE

In "Energy Policy and the Further Future," Derek Parfit re-introduces what has been called the Non-Identity Problem. As he posits, certain decisions made in the present will not only affect the state of affairs future generations find themselves in, but also will impact the circumstances of conceptions such that the particular people that exist in the future will be different than those who would have existed had the harming decision not been made. For Parfit, the problem lies in the fact that there are some decisions with harmful effects on future generations that are also the very decisions that cause future persons to exist as the particular persons they do. Unpalatably, the benefit granted by causing persons to exist is thought to outweigh the detriment done by the harmfulness of the decision. This paper begins by briefly reviewing Parfit's characterization of the problem and Lauren Hartzell-Nichols's solution to it. The author argues that her view, by insisting on a distinction between harmful and harmed conditions, cannot accommodate the intuition that the makers of such harming decisions are blameworthy. The author further considers a way in which her view might be amended to accommodate this problem, though concluding that this amendment cannot be successful.



THE NOËSIS PEER-REVIEW PROJECT

Noësis is offering yet another way to get involved with the journal and with undergraduate academic achievement! The Peer-Review Project allows students to contribute to the scholarly discourse happening at Noësis. Here's how it works:

1. Read Noësis—find our editions in the Jackman Humanities Building and at noesisjournal.wordpress.com.
2. Formulate comments—objections or expansions—in response to the paper.
3. Send your comments on an eligible paper* to review.noesis@gmail.com, thereby consenting to having your comments published on our website. Please indicate whether you would like your name to appear with your comment.

We'll review your comments, send them to the author, and publish your comments and the author's responses on our website as a supplementary edition of the paper.**

We look forward to seeing what you come up with!

*Papers are eligible to receive comments only within one month of publication, subject to author participation. See our website for a list of participating authors.

**Note that we will send comments to authors only if the comments meet a requisite standard of professionalism and ingenuity.

Quote on back cover:

οὐκοῦν ἀποδέδεικται καὶ ὅτι δυνατόν καὶ διότι μέγιστον τῶν ἀγαθῶν
καὶ κτήσασθαι ῥᾶδιον ἢ φιλοσοφία, ὥστε πάντων ἔνεκα προθύμως αὐτῆς
ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι ἄξιον.

Aristotle, *Protrepticus*. Edited and Translated by D. S. Hutchinson and M. R. Johnson,
2015, pp. 24-25, VI: 41.1-2.

"PHILOSOPHERS NEED NEITHER
TOOLS NOR SPECIAL PLACES
FOR THEIR OCCUPATION;
RATHER, WHEREVER IN THE INHABITED WORLD
ONE SETS ONE'S THOUGHT,
IT LATCHES ONTO THE TRUTH EQUALLY
AS IF IT WERE PRESENT EVERYWHERE."

-ARISTOTLE

